

Truth Project

**Experiences shared:
victims and survivors speak out**



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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

**Introduction by Professor Alexis Jay,
Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse**

As Chair of the Inquiry, I, along with the Panel, am determined to fulfil our Terms of Reference to consider the experiences of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse by providing opportunities for them to bear witness to the Inquiry. Our Truth Project enables victims and survivors to share their experiences with a member of the Inquiry in a safe environment.

This is the first report documenting those experiences and reminds us of the whole purpose of this Inquiry. Each serves as a powerful reminder of the devastating consequences of child sexual abuse, why it is so important that we hold institutions to account for past failures and why we need to help secure a safer future for all children.

We should not underestimate the importance of giving victims and survivors a voice. Our formal investigations can never include everyone with a contribution to make to the Inquiry, so the Truth Project can give people who may never have used that voice the opportunity to describe what happened to them in confidence, to someone who listens.

These experiences will inform our research project and help the Inquiry formulate reports and recommendations. They play a significant part in delivering our objectives. But there is something more, and it is just as fundamental. By publishing the first set of victims and survivors' experiences, we create a permanent record that cannot be swept under the carpet or ignored. They will act as a spotlight on the cultures and practices of institutions and serve as an enduring statement so that no-one can again claim ignorance of past institutional failures.

This will be one of several publications containing the experiences of victims and survivors. The Truth Project plays a significant part in our commitment to raising awareness of our work and enables victims and survivors to contribute to the Inquiry, even if they are not involved in any public hearings arising from our investigations.

These experiences make for difficult, often distressing reading. But it is important that they are read.

I commend the bravery of everybody who has chosen to share their experience. We promise that each and every one of you has been heard.



Experiences shared

The report contains anonymised summaries of some of the experiences that have been shared by victims and survivors at the Truth Project. The summaries have been anonymised and pseudonyms have been used for all victims and survivors and perpetrators. We have also removed details which could identify any victim or survivor, including locations, ages, years and institutions involved. Experiences reflect what each victim and survivor wanted to share and may be a part or all of their experience.

These are not all of the experiences that have been shared, but a selection from the private sessions of the Truth Project. We will continue to publish shared experiences and aim to publish as many summaries as we can. We have invited just under 500 victims and survivors to a private session and are working with others who will be offered a session in 2017. To date we have heard, or are shortly to hear, the experiences of approximately 250 victims and survivors in private sessions. Requests to share an experience in writing are not included in this first publication.

We have the greatest respect for those who have chosen to share their experiences with us. Each participant represented in this document gave their consent to their summary being shared publicly. Many victims and survivors have told us that they want society to talk about these issues, to talk about abuse, to remove it from the shadows and expose the secrecy, intimidation and abuse of power that shrouds child abuse experiences.

We are aware that we are publishing detailed personal accounts depicting child sexual abuse. As an Inquiry, we have carefully considered the tensions around the level of detail that we include in these summaries and the use of language to describe acts of abuse. We have also consulted with our Victims and Survivors' Consultative Panel about how best to put this information into the public domain. We have considered how some will read these accounts with good intentions, others will not. Nevertheless, one of the core aims of the Truth Project is to enable victims and survivors to have the opportunity to share their experience. Whilst there is precedence for publishing detailed accounts in this way, we wanted to ensure we did so in both a sensitive and impactful way, and have taken the time to consider these tensions.

Content warning

This report contains material that may be upsetting. Whilst the experiences in this report have been anonymised, they are true accounts from victims and survivors who have shared their experiences with us. They are not the full accounts shared with us, but we have not changed any aspect of the experiences except to edit identifying details.

Sharing an experience with the Inquiry

If you would like to share your experience of child sexual abuse, and/or institutional failure to tackle that abuse with the Inquiry, you can do so by contacting us at:

Online: www.iicsa.org.uk/share-your-experience

Email: contact@iicsa.org.uk

Information Line: 0800 917 1000

Writing: 'Freepost Head Office' (no other address details required)

While our [Terms of Reference](#) mean we have to look at institutional failures, we want to be as inclusive as possible in our Truth Project. If you think that taking part in the Truth Project may be relevant for you, but you are unsure, please contact us via any of the contact methods above and we will discuss this with you.

The Inquiry

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. Our Terms of Reference require us to:

- consider the extent to which state and non-state institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation;
- consider the extent to which those failings have since been addressed;
- identify further action needed to address any failings identified;
- consider the steps which are necessary for state and non-state institutions to take in order to protect children from such abuse in future;
- publish a report with recommendations; and
- consider the experience of survivors of child sexual abuse, providing opportunities for them to bear witness to the Inquiry, having regard to the need to provide appropriate support in doing so.

All state and non-state institutions in England and Wales are within our remit, and there is no cut-off date for the events the Inquiry is able to consider.

The Inquiry is guided by three principles: it will be comprehensive, inclusive, and thorough. We have devised how we will work around those principles by dividing the work up into three core projects:

- Public Hearings Project
- Research Project
- Truth Project

Together, the information, experiences and evidence received over the course of the three projects will inform the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Chair and the Panel. We will consider whether past failings have been addressed and identify what further action is needed to address the failings we identify.

We will identify institutional failings where they are found to exist. We will demand accountability for past institutional failings. We will support victims and survivors to share their experience of sexual abuse.

We will consider what steps the institutions need to take in order to protect children from abuse and we will publish our recommendations which will be practical and designed to foster meaningful change. We will suggest ways of ensuring that the recommendations we make are implemented effectively and have their intended impact.

The Inquiry is independent of Government. Where necessary we will, in due course, make recommendations to Ministers where we consider changes to policy or legislation are necessary.

Truth Project

The Inquiry wants to hear from all victims and survivors who would like to share their experience. The Truth Project has been established as a safe and secure way for them to do that - victims and survivors may share their experiences with the Inquiry in writing or, alternatively, during a private session.

The Truth Project process will have no direct legal consequences. The Inquiry will not make individual factual findings on the basis of what is said, either in writing or during a private session. However, unless a victim or survivor does not wish it, the information will be recorded, anonymised and aggregated for the purpose of analysis and will feed directly into the Inquiry's research and analytical work and, where relevant, into the Inquiry's investigations.

What abuse falls under the Terms of Reference

The Inquiry's Terms of Reference require us to investigate whether public bodies and other non-state institutions have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse in England and Wales. We want to hear from anyone who:

- was abused by a person in an institution; or
- first came into contact with the person that abused them in an institution; or
- reported the abuse to a person in authority and the report was ignored or not acted upon properly; or where
- someone in an institution could have known about the abuse and ignored it or did not act upon it properly.

We recognise that for some people who were sexually abused as children, abuse can take place in more than one institution or organisation and by more than one abuser. Victims and survivors can tell us about any or all institutions or organisations.

Private sessions

Truth Project private sessions take place in confidential and comfortable surroundings. Before victims and survivors attend a session, they can choose to speak with the Inquiry's support service who will give them information about what they can expect on the day, and can provide practical and emotional support. The support service will also be able to signpost victims and survivors to support in their local area if they wish.

On the day of the private session, victims and survivors will have a chance to share their experience with a member of the Inquiry. Victims and survivors can bring family, friends or other support with them into the session room. Sessions are led by either a Panel member or a private sessions facilitator. A second member of the Inquiry will also be in the room during the private session to enable the Inquiry to record the attendee's experiences. A support worker will provide support throughout the day and a counsellor will be available for additional support. Following the session, victims and survivors can again speak to someone from the Inquiry's support service if they would like to.

Written experiences

Experiences shared in writing are treated in exactly the same way as experiences shared at a private session.

Using your experiences

We will listen, hear and read everything that is shared with us through the Truth Project. Everything that is shared will be considered in all parts of the Inquiry's work and will be used to help us with findings and recommendations and, in some cases, to identify institutions or a specific area of institutional failure that we need to consider further. Consent from participants will be requested before the Inquiry uses the information shared (always excluding personal details) within our Research Project. We will also consider the experience if it is linked to one of the Inquiry's investigations and we may, where appropriate, contact participants to discuss their potential involvement in one of our investigations.

We also want to let others know of the experiences that are being shared, both as a legacy of the courage that each victim and survivor has shown in sharing their experience with us, and also to assure other victims and survivors that they can do the same if they want to. Anyone who shares their experience with us will be able to leave a short written message about any aspect of their experience; we are calling this 'Have your say'. These messages may also be published anonymously alongside reports to help people understand the impact of child sexual abuse and to recognise why it is so important that we protect children in the future.

Confidentiality

In order to ensure that the Inquiry is able to protect the confidentiality of the information it receives through the Truth Project, it has made a legal order known as a Restriction Order that protects the anonymity of the individuals who engage with the Truth Project and the confidentiality of the experiences they share. All information shared with the Inquiry will remain confidential throughout the work of the Inquiry.

Passing information to the police

Whilst the Inquiry will keep the information received through the Truth Project confidential, our Terms of Reference require us to refer to the police any allegation of child abuse we receive. We fulfil that aspect of our Terms of Reference by passing allegations to Operation Hydrant which, in addition to its role in receiving and disseminating information from the Inquiry, has a wider national role in police co-ordination of non-recent child abuse investigations.

Whilst we refer all allegations to the police we will only pass on the identity of the victim or survivor where they consent or where there are urgent safeguarding concerns relating to a child. Other than in those circumstances, information about the victims and survivors' experiences will not be disclosed to the police unless we are ordered by a court to do so.



EXPERIENCES SHARED

This is a set of personal experiences that have been shared with the Inquiry. These represent a sample of the experiences shared. Victims and survivors can share as little or as much as they want on any aspect of their experience.



Tina

Tina told the Inquiry she was a teenager when she was groomed by Roy, a married teacher at her school. She developed a crush on him, which he encouraged. He was charming and it seemed to be common knowledge amongst other staff that he liked to talk to the girls at the school.

Initially, Roy ignored Tina and spoke more to the older girls, but he did tell Tina that he liked her a lot.

Tina said that Roy began to pay her compliments and would take her out in his car, sing love songs, hold her hand and kiss her. On the return journey of a school outing, he parked the car and touched her inappropriately. He got Tina to touch him sexually and he did the same to her. This moved on to other sexual abuse and rape.

Tina recalls that Roy also took naked Polaroid pictures of her and, she believes, of other girls.

Tina said Roy made her feel that she was superior, that she was someone different. She later found a notebook which detailed names and things that Roy had done with other girls and women.

Tina told us that when he was seeing her, Roy told her parents that he was helping her to revise for her exams. After leaving school, Tina would see him every night and she said, "*Sex became a real chore.*" Roy began talking to Tina about other

girls, which she found very painful. She also found him controlling, deciding which social events Tina could attend. This control caused her to suffer from panic attacks and anxiety, as well as other symptoms, due to living a double life. Tina also reports having intrusive thoughts of harming her family.

At one point, Tina thought she may be pregnant and went to see her doctor. She was seen by a locum doctor who she said touched her inappropriately during the examination. The medical notes in relation to this examination have gone missing.

Roy eventually left the school after the police received information about Roy's conduct with other girls, but the matter did not proceed very far.

Tina believes the police had told Roy that he would not be interviewed about this again which, in Tina's view, led to him believing he was invincible. People knew what was happening to her and they did not do anything.

Tina reported an impact on her personality, saying that she did not know who she was. Her personality had been destroyed and it has taken her a long time to establish her own sense of self. She still suffers from anxiety and low self-esteem and has a fear of losing control.

Greg

Greg explained that he came from a very “church-going family”. His family moved to a new house in a small town and the family became very involved with the clergy who came to the church. When Greg was in his teens a new priest, Ken, came to the church. Greg's parents took Ken under their wing - he was always at their house and eating with the family.

Greg reported that the abuse began when he visited Ken's house one day to deliver cakes or biscuits from his mother. He found Ken masturbating and this continued in Greg's presence. At this point, Greg said he was very involved in the church and had aspirations to be a priest himself. When he attended church, Ken would invite him back to his house and Greg felt unable to refuse. Greg told us that sexual activity continued over a period of several years and became more serious over time. During this period, Ken continued to attend the family home and gave nothing away.

Greg described feeling more isolated, withdrawn and very lonely. He had thoughts about killing himself. When Ken eventually saw the effect that the abuse was having on him, it stopped for a while, but started again about a month later. Greg felt that Ken had power over him.

Greg described the abuse as “screwing” with his head; he thought that he wanted to become a priest but he was a child, being raped in a vicarage, in a room full of crucifixes and religious icons. Looking back and talking about the abuse, Greg feels that Ken groomed his family first,

before starting to groom him. Greg hoped he could forget about the abuse, but he started drinking heavily.

Some years ago, Greg started to think that he wanted to bring Ken to justice; he tried to find him but could not do so. At this point Greg felt like an “emotional wreck”. He found a church website for people to report abuse to them, with many statements of abuse being taken seriously and action taken. Greg completed a form but never heard anything back.

Several years later, after watching a TV programme about abuse in the Catholic Church in Ireland, Greg contacted a helpline number for a charity and was put in touch with a solicitor who helped him report the abuse to the police. Greg told us the police had problems tracing Ken, and the church initially refused to give his address or release their files. Greg said that when he eventually did get to see the files, it appeared that when Ken moved to the next church, he had abused other boys who had subsequently spoken out. Ken was then moved to another church. Greg believes no action was taken by the church, and Ken later retired on grounds of ill health and moved to live in a church residence.

In the file seen by Greg were letters between Ken and senior church leaders in which Ken said that he still felt that he had a vocation and wanted to work and was told that the church was keeping everything about the abuse in a separate file and Ken had nothing to worry about. Greg felt that there had been a huge

cover-up by the church which made it feel worse as no one did anything, although they could have stopped further abuse.

Greg recalls that eventually Ken was arrested and interviewed. The Crown Prosecution Service ('CPS') were hesitant to charge him and they decided not to prosecute. Following Ken's death, Greg said he felt frustrated that he never had the chance to take Ken to court and, at the time, he felt that the CPS were saying that Ken had not committed the abuse. The police advised Greg that he had enough evidence to take a civil action against the church, which he did. Greg did not go through the civil process for financial gain, but because he felt the church's reaction had destroyed his life. The church initially fought the case but it was settled.

Greg feels that the worst part for him was the covering up of the abuse and he wants the church to take these things seriously in the future. He feels that the church's attitude made him feel like the criminal and made him suffer over and over again.



Shaun

In his interview, Shaun told us he was abused from childhood for a number of years by his scoutmaster, Frank, who was also a friend of Shaun's parents. Frank's position as "*part of the family*" meant that he was able to sexually abuse Shaun hundreds of times, without raising suspicion. It was not until Shaun was an adult that he understood how wrong the abuse was, as abusers "*play with the heads*" of their victims and make them think the behaviour is normal. Frank has now been convicted and received a prison sentence. He had previously been convicted of other offences against children.



Shaun was not interviewed at the time that allegations were first made, despite the fact that Frank came into contact with hundreds of children in his job and scouting roles. Shaun thought that he and other potential victims should have been interviewed and he later lodged a complaint about this. Shaun is also disappointed that the Scout Association did not undertake an investigation following Frank's first conviction.

Shaun was a prosecution witness in the second court case and had mixed experiences of the trial. This was his first opportunity to tell the truth in public and he found the chance to be in the witness box and be cross-examined a cathartic experience. But he also found the court building to be poorly set up for victims and survivors; at one point, he found himself in the same room as Frank because Frank was able to walk freely around the building.

Whilst Shaun felt the legal professionals were very helpful, he considered that he was not sufficiently prepared for the court process and felt that support for victims and survivors, and the communication around what they experience in court, was not good enough. He was pleased when the judge sent Frank to prison and two days after the conviction, Shaun finally felt safe.

The successful outcome of the trial had been a long time coming for Shaun. He said that when he first lodged an allegation against Frank, he was told by the police that, as Frank had already been convicted, the Crown Prosecution Service would not be interested in a further prosecution. At that time, Shaun thought that he had to come to terms with the belief that he would never get justice for what had happened to him.



Shaun is working with a good counsellor now and recognises that he is getting better - there are things he can do now that he could not have done before. But Shaun described his experience of doctors, and access to psychological support, in the past as "*dreadful*". One doctor told him he should go home and learn to forgive; others were more supportive and referred him for National Health Service counselling, but the waiting list at the time was 12 to 18 months. Even an "*emergency*" referral resulted in an appointment letter arriving a month after the referral was made.

Through his own research, Shaun believes there were several opportunities to stop Frank from continuing to abuse. Shaun himself has felt guilt all his life for not speaking out sooner and preventing the abuse of others.

Shaun believes children need to have someone that they can tell about what is happening to them. In his case, his parents did not believe him or want to hear what he was telling them, and his abuser was in a position of authority. There was no trusted, independent body that Shaun could turn to.



Shaun thinks that abusers are able to hide their abuse because it remains a hidden subject in our society. He believes that there is not enough education and training to prevent abuse happening; police, medical professionals and teachers are not given enough training to recognise signs of abuse or how to deal with a child that discloses abuse. He believes children are not given enough information to understand that abuse is not normal, no matter what an adult might tell them to the contrary; parents are not taught enough about the dangers to their children from the internet. Shaun considers better education to be the key to fighting child sexual abuse.



Amy

Amy was brought up with social services as a major part of her life, with weekly meetings on all aspects of her care.

She suffered mental and physical abuse within her family and did not have a good relationship with her mother. Amy told us that she experienced a number of incidents of abuse which left her feeling angry and frustrated with both social services and the police.

The first occurred when Amy was a pre-teen child and had been chatting to Alex on a teen website, who she believed to be an 18-year-old male, but was in fact a male teacher. Alex started grooming her online, turning her against everyone, but as a child, this seemed normal to Amy and she had no idea that she was being groomed. Amy told us this continued for about five months, and she met with Alex on a number of occasions where he sexually abused her.

Amy told us that a month after this abuse ended, she skipped school with other friends and was drinking alcohol in the town centre. She cannot remember exactly why but she ended up in a local police station, drunk. She said she was later released and told to return home alone, with no money or other personal property and, as she left the police station, two unknown males were outside and kidnapped her. She recalls that they drove her around for a considerable time, trying to "do stuff" to her but eventually dropped

her off in an area of the town that she did not know. She described feeling completely lost and terrified. Amy remembers asking a woman for help but said she was referred to a man's house and he assaulted her. Amy then tried walking home and was stopped by a man driving a car who offered her a lift home. She explains that he took her to his house where he invited a number of other men over, all of whom sexually abused her. She believes this attack happened until the following morning, when she was taken home.

Over the next few days, Amy recalls going through a number of police interviews. Amy believes that the officers working on the case had preconceptions about Amy, based on information they received from others who knew her. Amy thinks one of the men involved was later found guilty and given a prison sentence.

There were allegations from other girls who had been abused by the same gang, but Amy thinks the police did not follow these up.

Whilst being interviewed about the kidnapping, Amy remembers that the police asked about the first abuse by Alex, but she felt she could not deal with it at the time and did not report it until later. Amy told us that when she did report what Alex had done, the police took no action, telling her that they could not accuse a man and destroy his life just because she said that he had abused her.

However, Alex was later taken to court, found guilty and given a lengthy prison sentence.

Amy feels angry and frustrated at social services and the police for the way that they have handled her care and the subsequent investigations. She feels the police messed everything up and it reached the point where Amy and her partner had to investigate everything themselves. The kidnapping from outside the police station was never investigated by the police.

Amy feels social services failed to properly undertake their responsibilities to her as a child. She stated that much of her social services file was negative, with comments saying that she was making the abuse up in order to get attention.

Amy had difficult teenage years and always felt that she wanted to kill herself. She was referred to a counsellor who has been a great support to her. She now feels she is over everything that has happened and no longer sees herself as an abused person. She has found ways to cope and has gained control over her experiences.

Joe

Joe told the Inquiry about abuse in a children's custodial institution. Mistreatment and neglect at home had led to Joe committing a range of petty thefts. He built up a record of offences and was sent to live at his first custodial institution. His experience there was very positive - he "absolutely adored it", but said he experienced abuse when he was later sent to another custodial institution



Joe explained that the day after arriving at the second institution, he was given cleaning duties and was told to clean the corridor. While cleaning, Joe forgot to stand up as a member of staff passed, and the staff member stamped on his hand. One day, another staff member, Billy, told him he would be working in the kitchens the next day, which Joe was pleased about. But a few hours after he had started in the kitchen, Billy took Joe upstairs to a storeroom, saying that he wanted the storeroom tidying up. While cleaning the storeroom, the officer started talking to Joe about sports and gave him a cigarette. Billy then touched Joe and started to abuse him. Joe described being shocked, he pulled away but Billy squeezed his throat, saying: "*You do what I want, nobody cares about you. You're just scum, you can disappear...*"

Joe said that Billy then raped him. Afterwards, Billy told Joe to sort himself out and shut the door. Joe stayed where he was for a while, crying; he did not tell anyone what had happened as he did not know who to tell.



On the night of the abuse, Joe described having trouble sleeping. He was woken at 6am the next morning to go to the kitchens. He realised that, in his terrified state, he had wet the bed. The officer in charge screamed at him and made him go naked to the shower block, constantly kicking him in front of other boys.

The abuse in the kitchen happened again the next night and every night thereafter. Joe said he felt absolutely terrified and was certain that he was going to die. He felt that he could not fight back.

Joe asked for a transfer and he moved to another custodial institution the following day. In the new institution, Joe was always on his guard and wary. One day in the dining room, Joe got into a fight and, inadvertently, hit one of the members of staff. That evening the staff member took him to a landing at the top of the stairs. Joe was terrified that this was the start of more abuse, but said, "*All he did was give me a good beating.*"



Joe is now married. After meeting his wife, he felt that he was able to put the abuse behind him. Everything was fine until his first child was born and Joe began to think that everyone wanted to harm his child. He was taking cannabis to mask his anguish and pain and, thinking his family would be better off without him, decided that he would kill himself. Fortunately, Joe was supported by a drugs counsellor who advised him to tell his wife and to go to the doctor to get help. The next morning, he recalls waking up in a deep depression and wondering why he had ever told

people. Joe told us he did not talk about it again for a number of years, but then had another breakdown. Joe then reported the abuse.

When Joe came forward, the police officer told him that he was entitled to criminal injuries compensation but that he should sue the government instead, as he would get more money. The police also put Joe in touch with a survivors' group, but he could not cope with this and struggled to listen to other people's experiences.

When it came to trial, Billy changed his plea to guilty before Joe was due to give evidence. On reading statements from other staff members, Joe saw that they knew what had been happening to some of the boys. Joe had not felt able to fight Billy off as he was terrified that he would die and felt completely powerless, but now he cannot get over this and still feels he should have fought Billy off. He described this as creating an incredible sense of shame which still hangs over him.



Joe said he was just a child when he went into the custodial institution. He had stolen to feed himself, but he was still just a frightened child. Now, he just wants someone to admit that they were wrong. He has gone through life thinking that nobody knew, and to find out that the other officers did know, but did not do anything about it, really hurts and infuriates him.



Russell

Russell told the Inquiry about abuse by a doctor. He explained that his father died when he was a baby and his mother met a new partner when Russell was approaching his teens. His mother married her new partner and they all moved in with him, registering with a new doctors' surgery, putting Russell into the hands of his abuser, his new general practitioner (GP), who was known to be "odd".

Looking back, Russell realises that he was abused by the GP from day one, even though his mother was in the room. On entering the surgery, the doctor's words would always be, "*Come on, let's just have a look to see how you are getting on.*" He described a set routine for each visit where the doctor would make Russell lie on a couch with his trousers down, even if Russell was seeing him because of a cough or a bad cold; the routine was always the same. It would start with genital and rectal examinations and other invasive procedures. The GP would get bored after a while, then get round to talking about the ailment that Russell had actually come to see him about. Russell can remember being terrified and would go home crying, in a state, and he would be sore after the examination and sometimes bruised.

Russell told us the abuse carried on for some time, until his teenage years, and one day the GP asked Russell to masturbate in front of him. Russell was horrified - he did not understand what the GP was talking about. On one of the last occasions, Russell sustained a minor injury to his leg and went to the doctor

alone, thinking that the abuse could not happen again. It did, although that was the last occasion.

Russell described carrying this around for many years, questioning in his own mind whether it was abuse. After a breakdown, he reported it to the police, despite the fact that the GP was now dead. The police told him that it would have been a very difficult case to investigate as the GP would have claimed that there was a medical reason for what he had done. Russell has spoken to others who were abused by the same GP. It appeared that people knew what was going on but, as it was a long time ago and the doctor was in a position of power, no action was taken.

Russell held back from talking about his abuse for many years, until it came out in a counselling session. Since then he has not been able to forget about it.

Pamela

Pamela reported that her early life was loveless and characterised by brutality and neglect. She was placed in a residential nursery as a baby, after the death of her mother, and later lived with her stepfamily as a young child until her early teenage years. She described her life as extremely unhappy and remembers beatings, starvation and neglect.



In her early teenage years, Pamela experienced psychological trauma and suffered from eating disorders and spent some time in hospital. Later on, she lived in homeless shelters, self-medicating and addicted to prescription drugs. She became involved in a string of abusive relationships and it was only the discovery that she was pregnant with her first child that gave her enough focus to start taking care of herself.

Pamela told us that, as an adult, she discovered that her young child was being sexually abused by an organised group. This horrifying news acted as a trigger for Pamela, who was flooded with nightmares and flashbacks. She realised they were repressed memories of her own organised and systematic abuse, which included being raped by groups of men. Unable to control the torrent of memories or cope with their impact, Pamela said she suffered a severe psychological breakdown and has since been diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder.

The one good thing that Pamela was able to take from this devastating experience was, she said, the knowledge that “*at least I now had the reasons why I persistently*

suffered a myriad of somatic and psychological ailments and why I was so held back in my development”.

Pamela described the last few years as being very difficult. She has struggled to support her children, deal with her own recovery from trauma and gain access to the medical notes and records from her childhood to try to discover how her abuse could have been allowed to continue unchecked for so long. Despite social services, children’s services, children’s charities and the local health board all being involved in (and, at points, responsible for) Pamela’s care, it seems that her horrific abuse and neglect took place unnoticed. “*What’s glaring to me,*” said Pamela today, “*is that the agencies were useless*.”



Pamela continues to encounter difficulties in trying to access her medical and social service records, despite seeking assistance from others. “*Over the last 12 years I have been sent from one person and organisation to another in my attempt to get help and answers*.” Pamela has now accessed some counselling which is offered sporadically but is, she said, “*better than nothing*”, although she hopes to engage in some further therapy in the future which she’s looking forward to.

Jamie

Jamie told us he grew up in a closed religious community. He said he was abused for several months in his early teens by Andrew, who worked at the youth club he attended. Jamie did not say anything at the time, not even to his parents.

Jamie described the culture of the community as very closed, and said all issues were expected to be dealt with within the community. The community even provided its own services such as healthcare, schools and religious courts. Whilst it was unlikely to be enforced, the act of going outside the community was said to be punishable by death, including going to the police without exploring internal channels first. Children in the community were not allowed access to external media such as television, radio or the internet, so all they knew was what they were taught at the schools and by their families. Child protection was almost non-existent and children did not know where to go for help outside the community.

Jamie told us that a few years ago he decided to report the abuse to a community leader.

He was told that there was nothing they could do as Jamie was the only witness.

By chance, Jamie came across someone who had witnessed Andrew abusing someone else, but the community leader decided that this was still not enough. It was at this point that Jamie realised that, whilst the community said it would be possible to go to the police, there were too many barriers for this to happen. Jamie decided to go outside the community rules and reported it to the police.

The police approached Andrew, who was arrested and admitted the offences, which was when Jamie said the intimidation began. The police were informed but said that, as the individuals were just on the right side of the law, there was nothing that could be done. Jamie told the police that he was not prepared to go to court and the case was dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service. Jamie feels that very few people come forward to report abuse in his religious community, but when they do, most withdraw due to pressure and intimidation from within that community.

Jamie now believes that the Inquiry must consider how to 'break into' such communities to give them a voice.

Joseph

In his session, Joseph told us he was abused by his Scoutmaster, Seth, on a weekly basis when he was in the Scouts. He believes that Seth was also abusing other children, although Joseph did not know this at the time. An incident occurred at a Scout camp and another person made an allegation against Seth, who was then asked to leave. Joseph understands that this incident was not reported to the police by the Scouts, and believes that Seth then went on to abuse others. He described feeling guilty for not saying anything at the time about the abuse he suffered as he feels that, if he had done so, this may have stopped other children being abused.

Joseph told us that another person who was abused by Seth made a complaint about the abuse he suffered at the hands of Seth. This information then appeared in the press, which Joseph saw. He came forward, as did other victims. Joseph now questions whether the Scout Association knew the full extent of what Seth had done and tried to cover it up, or whether they were unaware of the scale of the abuse. Joseph said that Seth was charged, but died before his trial came to court. Joseph received news of this from a victims' group and the impact of this information was so great that he had to leave his job.

Joseph recalls that he received no real help to support him through what had happened, apart from a victims and survivors' group, which he did not feel was appropriate for him. He tried to deal with his issues himself, which impacted on his

personal relationships. His last relationship broke down and he is now estranged from his children and does not speak to his parents.

Joseph told us that a few years ago, he approached the Scout Association directly to seek help but they were not interested. They said they could not help him, suggesting that he seek help from his own doctor instead. Joseph said he had to fund expensive therapy, taking months off work due to the impact this was having on him. His employer at the time supported him, offering full pay whilst he was on sick leave, but he feels that other people might not be lucky enough to have such a supportive and tolerant employer.

Joseph explained that he took the Scout Association to court and won his case, receiving an out of court settlement on the basis that they were vicariously liable, although Seth was not an employee of the Scouts. But Joseph feels that the way the legal system is set up does not work for victims and survivors. He feels the system works for and favours the insurance companies, with blame being pushed back to the victims and survivors. He felt that he was put under pressure to agree a settlement which favoured the insurance company and not him. Joseph hopes that by sharing his experiences, this will help to change things for people like him in the future.

Sonia

Sonia described herself as a happily married mother and a successful businesswoman, with a busy but fun family life which is full of laughter. She is a trustworthy and loyal friend and has a sarcastic sense of humour. Of least importance to Sonia is that she is a victim of child sexual abuse. She listed this last as, whilst she knows that the abuse has affected and shaped certain aspects of her, it does not define her.

Sonia told us her abuser had a privileged opportunity to abuse her; he was her older brother. Sonia said he abused her for a number of years, starting when she was a young child. The abuse was frequent and happened at every opportunity. The pattern was always the same; Paul would make her lie face down and abuse her by sexual touching. This happened in various places in the home.

For Sonia, the worst part of the abuse was the fear and anticipation of never knowing when it was going to happen. To gain some control towards the end of the abuse, she would often offer herself to get it “over and done with”.

Sonia tried to tell her mother, but said her mother dismissed it and told her that she should never say it again. Shortly after this disclosure, Paul raped Sonia. Sonia was hysterical, sobbing and distressed. She told Paul that if he ever did this again she would tell their parents and the abuse then stopped.

When Sonia was a teenager, she recalls telling a teacher about the abuse but did not say who the abuser was. She met with

the school counsellor a few times but the school took no further action. Sonia told us she also disclosed the abuse to a family member, Carl, who was a police officer at the time. Carl stopped her from talking about the abuse, so as not to cause problems in the family.



Eventually, Sonia took the brave step of reporting the abuse to the police, placing her trust and faith in them. Following a series of meetings, she withdrew her complaint for personal reasons, but thinks the police continued their investigation without her knowledge or consent. Sonia believes the police also leaked the information about her allegations to Carl and provided him with copies of her police statement.

Sonia told us she made a complaint about the police force, which was investigated. She was also contacted by another police force, who had started a separate investigation into other allegations against Paul and identified Sonia as a victim. Sonia said she found her experiences of the police to be traumatic, with extremes of failure, but also found there were some very good officers who supported her. Sonia believes that “*the hardest part of childhood sexual abuse should be surviving, not the journey for justice, closure and recovery*”.

Sonia thinks perpetrators use an array of ‘tricks’ to ensure compliance, saying “it’s our secret” and “let’s play a game”. Sonia believes that a child suffering abuse does not understand what is happening to them - sex and sexuality are a mystery, so it is not easy to recognise abuse.

Martin

Martin told us he was abused by someone who was involved in the church. He now finds it difficult to understand how the abuse could have happened, and said it is only in the past few years that memories of the abuse have come back, although he was a teenager at the time of the abuse. Although Martin only recalls abuse happening on one occasion, it has had a significant impact on his life.

Martin's abuser was in a position of trust at the church his family belonged to. His parents did not find it unusual that Martin was visiting the perpetrator's house, where the abuse happened. Martin did not tell anyone about the abuse at the time, because he did not know who to tell; he said it is very difficult when someone you trust does something that you do not understand - he did not know what a paedophile was at the time.

Martin has still not mentioned the abuse to his family and is afraid of their reaction. He fears that if he tells them, they will no longer speak to him.

After the abuse happened, Martin started to withdraw emotionally as well as physically. He slowly left the clubs that he was part of, especially those that were linked to the church, because he did not want to be near the church or the person who abused him. As a result of the abuse, he described finding social situations difficult because he finds it hard to trust people. He only has a few close friends, says he expects things not to go right in his life, and expects "not to be wanted".

Despite the fact that Martin has had difficult times in his life, he has found ways of coping and now thinks that instead of "*heading towards the cliff edge*" he has "*managed to pull myself out of it*".

When his life hit a very low point he recognised that, and decided that he needed to do something about it. He found a support service that worked with survivors of non-recent abuse and spoke to someone there. This helped and he realises now that the events are in the past, so he can focus on what he wants to do now because he does not want what happened to him to dominate his life.

Martin decided to contact the Inquiry because the person who abused him was someone on the periphery of an organisation; he did not want this type of abuser to "*slide under the radar*", as he feels that often only those directly employed by the church or other institutions are subject to proper vetting and scrutiny.

Hayley

In her private session, Hayley told us that she and her sisters had been in and out of care as children, because their father was physically abusive and “*my parents did not want me*”. As a young child, she was taken to a children’s home where she was sexually abused by a male member of staff, David. She said that every week for a year he took her to a different part of the home to “*do things*”, sometimes accompanied by another man.

One day she was told that she was being taken to see her mum, but instead she described being put in a car with the doors locked. David drove to a flat where the other man was waiting for them.

Hayley recalls being tied to a chair and having her clothes cut from her, and said she was then raped for hours. Eventually they stopped, dressed her in new clothes and took her back. She told the staff, teachers and a nurse at school that she was sore but no one said or did anything.

Later Hayley left the children’s home with her sister and was placed in a foster family. She described the foster father as lovely, but the foster mother was not so nice. Hayley said she was beaten by her - punched and kicked and on one occasion thrown down the stairs. She learned to tell by the look on the foster mother’s face whether she would be beaten or not that particular day. She told the social worker

but nothing was done. Hayley said she felt that the world was going so fast that she could not stop it. She would shout out loud, “*stop now!*”, but it did not. She asked to move to a different foster home as she believed that her foster mother might kill her.

Hayley told us that when she moved into a new children’s home, a care worker took a dislike to her, beating her and causing injuries to her. She ran away but returned the next morning as she had nowhere else to go. She remembers that the police were at the children’s home when she returned, but they were told that she was a liar who had injured herself and no action was taken. She was given a bath, cleaned up and sent to school where a teacher beat her up, then sent her back to the children’s home to another beating by the care worker. She did not tell her sister as they were not close and no one seemed to care or tried to stop what was happening; she felt there was no-one for her to go to for help.

Hayley then moved in with members of her extended family and said that their son raped her. When she told his parents, they sent her back to the home where the care worker continued to beat her. She stopped going to school and was told that she would be sent to a new placement. She thought that this would be a way out, but told us that two male teachers at the new school raped her. She was told that no-one would believe her if she reported it and, if she did say anything, she would be accused of stealing and the police would put her in prison.

As a teenager, Hayley met a man who was

her “way out” and she married him later. They have been married now for many years and he has helped her to deal with the consequences of her abuse which have included post-traumatic stress disorder, nightmares and flashbacks. She has had no other help or support but recently went to her general practitioner and was referred to a counselling agency that provides volunteer support.

**A couple of years ago,
Hayley decided to go to the
police. She attended a lot of
interviews and said she had
to relive her experiences
many times over, and felt
relieved when she heard
that the care worker was to
be charged.**

However, the charges against the care worker were subsequently dropped. Hayley feels that she was not able to get any justice from the system with regard to what had happened to her in the past and she feels as though she has been abused again. She thinks that she would have been safer if she had stayed at home with her father.

Several decades ago, Ian enrolled in a Catholic grammar school. He enjoyed the first few years of school but then a young teacher, Jim, came to the school. He singled out and befriended Ian and offered to provide extra tuition. He persuaded Ian's mother that because the family home was noisy, it would be better to do the tuition in Ian's bedroom.

Ian said that it was after Jim took him into his bedroom that the abuse began. To begin with it involved masturbation, with Jim telling Ian that he (Ian) had to touch him. He recalls that the threats started immediately - Jim told Ian that if he told anyone, he could be prosecuted and put in prison. Ian felt unable to tell his family because his mother had health issues.

Ian recalls the abuse happened for a while, sometimes several times a week. Ian felt totally trapped by the abuse, to the point where he was unable to run away physically and felt trapped because if he tried to harm Jim he would, in the eyes of the church, be committing a mortal sin. He felt there was no way out and that he would just have to submit to the abuse.

Ian described coming up with a coping mechanism to help deal with the abuse and to regain some feeling of control. But in adult life, this has come to haunt Ian and has become something more sinister in his head; he considers that he had sold himself rather than recognising this as a desperate attempt by an abused child to gain some level of control.

Ian remembers being asked to assist at the Requiem Mass, which would have

required him to take communion in front of everyone, including Jim. In line with Catholic teaching, Ian knew that he could only do this if he went to confession and disclosed the "sin" of his abuse, so the day before the mass, he went to confession and told a priest what Jim was doing to him. The priest made Ian kneel on a stool in front of him in a side room, without curtains separating them, and listened to it all. Following the confession, the priest gave Ian absolution and asked if he would repeat what he had said outside of confession to the headmaster, and Ian agreed.

Ian told us that the following day, the headmaster told him that they would bring in a priest to investigate. When the priest arrived, he asked Ian strange questions and asked Ian to promise not say anything to anyone else because they would deal with it, so Ian agreed.

Ian failed his exams at school. He realises now that this was because his brain was in survival mode. He asked the school if he could re-sit them but was told there was no room. Ian thought they had not believed that he had been abused and continued to think so for many years. He left school with no qualifications and worked in manual jobs. He feels that his potential was curtailed and he did not get any opportunity to flourish, but always thought that it was his fault.

Many years later, Ian started to experience 'empty nest syndrome' and felt that he was going through a grieving process, but the person that he was grieving for was himself as a young boy.

This led to the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder and Ian suffered a breakdown. During the first few weeks of his breakdown, Ian described Jim being "*in his head*" all the time; suppressed memories of the abuse began coming back and Ian thought that he was going mad. He looked at his school records to see if there was any reference to his abuse, but there was not. Ian said that after he saw the school records, he prepared a court claim which he sent to the church, prior to submitting it to the court. The church offered a day of mediation, which Ian agreed to, during which he was told that no one at the school knew anything about the abuse. They offered him a payment with a compromise agreement, which he accepted.

Ian later felt that he had betrayed himself by entering into a compromise agreement, so he ignored it and reported Jim to the police, and Jim was arrested. When questioned, Jim said that he vaguely remembered Ian. The Crown Prosecution Service told Ian that it was his word against Jim's and there was not enough evidence, although he found them very helpful. The case went no further but Ian decided to make another report to the police, who advised that he could take out a private prosecution.

Ian told us he wrote to Jim and this led to Jim making a confession. The police arrested Jim and secured an admission, but at the trial, Jim's legal team asked for his evidence to be disregarded as the police had not followed the correct process when he was arrested. As a result, Ian understands that the judge had no

choice but to stop the trial.

Ian believes that the scale and nature of the abuse was huge, made worse by the continued and absolute denial of the church about it. Ian considers that the mindset of the church has not changed and believes it is still a corrupt institution.

Ruth

Ruth told us that when she visited her grandfather in a nursing home, her memories of child sexual abuse came back to her.

Ruth spent most of her school holidays in her grandparents' house, where the abuse started. It stopped when Ruth was a teenager. She said the abuse started in her grandfather's house but later she was taken to a place that looked like a gentleman's club, where she saw other older men with young girls; she believes her grandfather was part of a paedophile ring. Ruth thinks the abuse in her grandfather's house would have left physical evidence which would have been visible to others, including her grandmother, but nothing was ever done about it.

The abuse caused Ruth to do "stupid" things such as self-harm and commit vandalism. She feels these should have been seen as clear signs that all was not well, but no one questioned the reasons for her behaviour.

When Ruth first experienced the flashbacks of the abuse, she could not function but she managed to stay out of hospital because of the support of her family. Ruth said she is now recovering from years of substance misuse. For a long time, she was not able to understand why she was misusing substances but, as the memories of abuse started to surface, the reasons became clear to her and she has now begun to move forward with her life. She has a very supportive family and this

has helped her a great deal.

Ruth contacted the police who arranged a meeting in a police station. She described this meeting as a very formal interview with lots of repeated questions, and she has since heard that the police investigated the case but were unable to take it forward.

When Ruth saw her grandfather for the last time, she felt that she wanted to kill him. She went into the garden of the nursing home and cried about all the memories that were flooding back. Ruth does not really want a particular outcome for herself from sharing her experience, other than to make it known that her grandfather was not the upstanding member of the community he appeared to have been. She does, however, want children to be made aware that they should tell someone if they are touched in a certain way.



Tim

Tim told us that he and his family were pleased when he was allocated a place at the local church school. The headmaster of the school asked Tim to join the school choir, which he did. Tim said that the headmaster "took a shine" to him and regularly called him to his office to undertake reading tests and to read to him. After a while these sessions changed and, whilst Tim was reading the headmaster began touching him inappropriately, before sending him back to class. Tim did not understand what was going on.



He remembers that the touching continued during reading sessions in the headmaster's office and progressed to the headmaster putting his hand inside Tim's trousers. Tim knew this was wrong but did not know what to do, and did not think anyone would believe him as the headmaster was well-respected. Tim had had no sex education and did not have the language to tell anyone what was happening.

Tim told us that during music lessons outside the school day, the headteacher touched and masturbated Tim, sometimes at his home and at another property.



Tim described the impact of the abuse on his life; his school work deteriorated and he left school with only a few qualifications, taking a series of jobs and travelling the country. After he met his wife, life slowly improved for him and he now has a job he loves and good friends.

Tim learnt that other pupils at the school had made allegations of sexual abuse against the headmaster. The complaints had been made many years ago but the council had apparently destroyed the file relating to the allegations more recently, which Tim feels was part of a cover-up. He was advised that a member of staff at the school had reported the headmaster's behaviour to the church and the council, but the headmaster was allowed to move to other schools without investigation.

Jack

Jack was a pupil at a boarding school. He was subject to what he described as a “sophisticated grooming process” by Mr Smith, who was a teacher at the school.

Jack told us that the grooming took place over a period of around three years, and then the abuse started. Jack looked mature for his age and believes that Mr Smith targeted him because of this.

Mr Smith groomed Jack using methods including giving him access to inappropriate material, such as magazines or books with a sexual content. The magazines were not necessarily ‘top shelf’, but nor were they meant to be seen or read by children. One of the books contained explicit pictures and Mr Smith would leave it in classrooms that were accessible to pupils. Jack recalls that the conversations with Mr Smith became more grown up and one particular conversation involved Mr Smith asking whether Jack was masturbating.

Jack does not remember how the abuse started and cannot recall all instances, although he thinks it took place over a period of about a year. He also remembers that at some point, he began masturbating and Mr Smith joined in and took over and also performed oral sex on Jack. He did not want to tell anyone at the time the abuse was occurring; in any event, he was not in an environment where he thought that would have been possible.

Jack is convinced that there were other victims in the school and that people knew about the abuse. In Jack’s view, the school was a highly sexualised environment and he believes that there was another teacher abusing pupils, but he was not a victim of this abuser.

Jack described the effect on him at the time, which was that he became a highly sexualised and overly confident teenager. He tried to carry on as normal, but his concept of normality had changed.

He has struggled over the years with why he let the abuse happen and has felt disgusted by what happened to him, wondering whether he should have said something, but feels he has now been able to put it to the back of his mind and rationalise it.

Jack feels that abuse of this nature could be prevented by not permitting staff to live on school grounds, so preventing them from having access to pupils.

Patrick

From a young age, Patrick went to a residential school. He described being abused by Angus, an older pupil at the school, who would come into his dormitory bed at night.

At the time, Patrick thought that maybe they had to share beds because there were not enough beds at the school for all the pupils to have their own bed. He did not tell anyone about what was happening to him and although he was afraid and cried a lot of the time, no one asked why, even when Angus was caught in Patrick's dormitory one night. Eventually, the abuse stopped when Angus was removed from the school. Patrick has since been told by police that this was because the staff caught Angus abusing another pupil at the school, so "*they could not pretend it wasn't happening*".

Patrick told us that the sadness and depression he suffered from as a result of the abuse has prevented him from having children, because he fears that any child would experience similar abuse. It has also impacted on and restricted his ability to have loving and intimate relationships and ruined his relationship with his parents and family. He does not feel close to any of them and has not been able to tell his mother he loves her since the abuse.

The stress and anxiety also affected Patrick's health. He believes the psychological injuries from the abuse led to him experiencing mental health problems which have negatively impacted his academic performance and career opportunities. Patrick's health problems worsened during the time leading up to

him reporting his abuse to the police a few years ago.

Patrick thought the police were "*pretty good*", although the long wait to give evidence was difficult to deal with. Conversely, when he approached the school, they were hostile and dismissive of his claims. Patrick took the school to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority to claim compensation. Three other individuals who had been abused got in touch on social media and provided evidence at the tribunal. As a result, the tribunal panel found in Patrick's favour and he finally won compensation for his abuse.

Patrick has been having therapy for the injuries caused by his abuse, which has eased some of his symptoms. He feels that the negative and incredibly damaging consequences of child sexual abuse grow exponentially from the moment the abuse starts, and believes that anything that can be done to ensure that abuse does not happen should be the highest priority. The prompt and compassionate treatment of victims and survivors should be of equal importance.

Jerry

Jerry told us he was abused as a teenager by a family friend, Vince, who was closely associated with the church. The abuse went on for a few months but stopped after Jerry's father was warned by someone in the church. Not long afterwards, Vince was moved to another church and Jerry often wondered if it was because of the abuse.

Jerry recalls he buried the abuse for a long time, although it somewhat affected his teenage years. As an adult he got a good job and met his wife, to whom he is still happily married. Jerry attended therapy for unrelated difficulties in his family life, and he told the therapist what had happened to him.

Around that time, Jerry saw on social media that Vince was working with children at a school. He felt he had to do something so he wrote a few times to the headmaster at the school, but there was no response.

Jerry told us that after a few months, Vince sent him an email out of the blue through social media. Jerry suspected that the headmaster had told Vince that someone was accusing him of offences against children; Jerry asked Vince for an apology but heard nothing back.

Jerry decided to make a formal complaint to the police. He said that the officer who interviewed Jerry told him he was a committed Christian which, given the

circumstances, made Jerry feel uncomfortable. At the time, Jerry was the only complainant and the police found no evidence to support his account. However, Jerry was in no doubt that the police believed him, despite being unable to proceed further.

Jerry described feeling very uneasy, because he knew that Vince was still working in a position of trust with children. Jerry feels he was treated abysmally and the headmaster caused him an enormous amount of pain and anguish.

Throughout this time, Vince was a preacher in the local church and the church representative in a local school. Jerry told us he could not continue to live with the thought of Vince having access to children, so later he also wrote to a senior church leader. As a result of the letter, the child protection officer in the local diocese got in touch and told him she was aware of the complaint. Vince was subsequently interviewed and denied everything. He kept his licence to preach and continued working at the school. At the end of their last conversation, the child protection officer said, "*let the healing begin*", a comment that Jerry did not understand.

Jerry said he wrote again to another senior church leader, after hearing public statements regarding the church's response to abuse. He never received a response and believes that public statements made by the church are "window-dressing" and a sham.

Jerry recalls he did not hear anything further until the police rang him to say that another complainant had come forward. After this, Vince was charged

with a long list of sexual abuses against children. The abuse was extensive and went on for many years. The case went to court and the jury found Vince guilty on a large number of charges. There was overwhelming evidence, some of which Jerry had provided.

Immediately after the court case, the church made a statement to the press, offering sympathy to the victims and a public apology, but Jerry said they never apologised to him.

He believes that the church did not want to offer a personal apology in case this was construed as accepting liability. He never heard from the school, either.

Jerry feels he has a successful life, a loving family and an accomplished career. He wanted to share his experience with the Inquiry so that those in authority face up to their failings and in the hope that it will resonate with some victims and survivors who are not able to come forward to share what happened to them.

George

George told us it has taken him a long time to get to this point and to realise how abuse has affected him. He left home in his mid-teens as he did not have a great family life and joined the Navy, thinking this would be a better life for him. He was drafted on board a ship and, on one of his tours, there was an officer on the same deck, Denis.

Denis was supposed to be a friend, but George feels that he groomed him. Denis and George were in the same sleeping quarters and Denis would abuse George sexually when they were on tour – George said this happened all the time. As a result, George began having problems at work which affected his mental health. One of the other young people on board told him they were glad that he was now Denis' target, as that meant that he would leave them alone.

widespread and there would have been other people who would have been subjected to the same sort of abuse that he suffered.



Even now, George sees anti-bullying and anti-racism material on the Navy website, but nothing about sexual abuse. He is convinced that what he suffered is still happening today.

George told us that he has been living with the effects of what happened to him in the Navy all his life. He decided to come forward to share his experience and hopes that others who have experienced similar abuse will be able to come forward. He would hate for any other young boy to experience what he went through and feels that the Navy has failed him.



George was not in a position to complain on board. He believes the attitude in the Navy then was that he would have been seen to have led Denis on. George was not able to report the abuse until he returned from the tour and saw a Navy doctor, who was not sympathetic. His response was to recommend George for discharge, which again affected his mental health. The Navy had a mental health facility, but George was not sent there for treatment; he was discharged and left to fend for himself – he said they just put him "*out on the street*". George now feels angry that the Navy did not show any duty of care to him and did not seek to provide him with any help. He believes that this abuse must have been

Ralph

Ralph was a young child when his parents enrolled him in an independent Catholic school. He told the Inquiry that he has very few memories of his time at the school, or more generally from that time, but he started to get flashbacks. He wrote to the school and received an “*apology*”.

The flashbacks took Ralph back to class where one of the staff, Brother Alfred, took him to a shed and sat Ralph between his legs.

The Brother would then make Ralph watch him carry out sadistic acts. Ralph cannot remember whether other things happened to him, and does not want to remember, but what he can remember was of a sadistic nature.

Ralph recently underwent hypnotherapy which, he believed, could aid his recovery but described this as a harrowing experience – he fought to get up from the chair and could remember clearly the feeling of a hand on the back of his neck. Ralph has always had a fear of, and fascination with, men’s hands, but is not sure why. He does not like people to touch him and is a recluse, other than at work.

After the “*apology*”, the school featured on a television programme looking at non-recent sexual abuse at the school. Ralph contacted the police force investigating the case and was interviewed. The officer in charge recommended that Ralph get counselling, which was partly funded through a local charity and partly with his own money.

He wrote to the church’s headquarters to say that he was having to pay for his own counselling and received a reply offering him a few hundred pounds.

Ralph wrote to the Vatican about his experience. He received an apology and was told to go back and tell the church headquarters how much he wanted as compensation. Ralph wrote back but did not specify an amount. He received a letter back stating that they were not in a position to offer more than a specified amount, and only on the basis that they did not accept liability. The letter said that if he did not accept the offer, he should contact lawyers and the offer would be withdrawn.

Ralph was never interested in the compensation - he just wanted an apology directly from the Order and not an apology through lawyers. Ralph never received an apology or compensation.

Dean

Dean told us that as a boy, he liked to sing. He was accepted into a school as a boarder and joined the school choir and he thought that singing in the cathedral was like "*being in heaven*".

There were two things about the school that Dean accepted as being normal: routine and intense physical abuse - usually caning for very minor matters, and sexual intimacy between students, which he thought was normal in a boarding school. Dean was drawn into two relationships. The first was with a choirmaster, Winston, who took a particular interest in Dean's musical development.

He thought Winston was a “*special friend*”, and said they connected both emotionally and physically.

Dean has blocked out memories of the specific events of the abuse, but he is sure there was sexual activity. He recalls one occasion when Winston came to the house and invited Dean to go for a ride in his car. Winston stopped at the side of a road and went into the bushes, saying he needed to go to the toilet. Dean followed him and he asked Dean to fondle his genitals, which he refused to do. They got back in the car and drove home.

Dean told us the second abuser was a teacher who took Dean into his room and sexually abused him. Dean ran away from the school, walking miles to his friend's house, but was eventually taken back to the school by his father. During the drive back to the school Dean told his dad that

he feared being caned for running away. His father said that he would not let that happen, and spoke to the headmaster who promised not to cane Dean but, after Dean's father left, the headmaster caned him anyway.

Dean said that many years later, the police investigated the teacher and he denied everything. The police told Dean that it was up to him to decide whether he wanted his case to go forward to the Crown Prosecution Service as part of a wider set of charges.

Dean has suffered from abandonment issues all his life and described feeling vulnerable and defenceless. He thinks this is because he was unable to stop the canings and the sexual activity. Dean has struggled to maintain relationships, and said his relationship with his children had been affected as he is not comfortable touching or hugging his kids, as that tends to trigger memories for him.

Lily

When Lily was young, she and her siblings were placed into care and the siblings were split up, much to Lily's disappointment. For the first few years, Lily told us that she was placed with some of her siblings in a religious care institution and experienced no forms of abuse there. But she was then moved to another home with one of her siblings. Lily describes this home as a 'workhouse' rather than a home; she says it was 'cold', 'religious', there was "no warmth" and it was a matter of "*survival of the fittest*".

Following her time in the second home, Lily was moved whilst still a pre-teen to a third care home to join some of her other siblings. She says this home did not provide a supportive environment for children but instead pitted child against child, and they "*just had to survive it*". It was at this home that Lily told us she experienced a range of abuse, including excessive beatings and sexual abuse by older boys.

Lily felt unable to confide in her siblings at the home, but said she told the adults running the home about the sexual abuse. However, she was not believed and was blamed for what had happened to her. Her behaviour was compared to her mother's, yet Lily never saw her mother and, even as a young child felt she was labelled as a sexual predator.

Lily believes that based on this labelling, she was sent to a religious residential school to be watched over constantly, as it was deemed that she was the one whose behaviour needed to be monitored. The nuns looking after Lily had no

specialist training to look after her and help her with what she had experienced. She said a range of documents accompanied her from home to home, identifying how she had been labelled. These documents were written by professionals charged with responsibility for her, such as doctors, school medical officers, psychiatrists and the Head of Care of the local Children's Department. Lily told us that the professionals acting in this way led her to feeling "*total abandonment; sacrificed by the system and condemned to live with the harm*".

A few years ago, Lily was approached unexpectedly by the police as someone had mentioned that she was an abuse victim in the same circumstances, and Lily says she later received an apology from social services for what had happened to her.

Lawrence

Lawrence described being abused by the headmaster, Stanley, whilst he was a pupil at a preparatory school. He told us that during this time, he went from being a seemingly happy child to feeling he was worth nothing. He was not able to tell anyone about the abuse, as the school was very old fashioned in attitude and offered no pastoral care.

Stanley's offending seemed to be an open secret at the school. Lawrence believes that everyone, including parents of pupils, knew what was going on but no one did anything about it.

As the rumours grew, Lawrence said that even his own mother was in denial and did not act. Then someone complained and Stanley was quickly 'helped' to leave the school. Lawrence thinks he was "*paid off*" by the school, and other parents were told that he had left for personal reasons.

When Stanley left, there was an expectation that the abuse was now all dealt with and should be forgotten, an attitude which Lawrence said was shared by his mother, who told him to pull himself together. More recently, Lawrence has found out that the police were made aware of the names of children who may have suffered abuse, one of whom was Lawrence. The case went to the magistrates' court and then the Crown Court, but a decision was made to proceed with only two main charges.

Lawrence believes that the judge at the

trial put pressure on the witnesses, and he directed a verdict of not guilty. At the end of the trial, the judge said to Stanley that, as he had been found not guilty, he could leave the court with his good name intact. Lawrence was told by letter that Stanley had been found not guilty. He was furious and devastated.

Lawrence told us the police advised him that they had found a very large number of indecent images on Stanley's computer, but none of these were taken into account at the trial or at any other point. Several witnesses' cases were discarded and not even allowed to lie on file. After the trial, the local police force told Lawrence, "*do not worry, we'll get him*" - it was reassuring that the police knew that justice hadn't been done. However, Lawrence heard nothing further after the trial.

It was not until a few years later that Lawrence realised that what Stanley had done to him and other victims was grooming.

He told us he went back to the police to see whether the case could be reopened, and formally reported the crime again. There was no contact from the police until an officer came to speak to him. Their conversation lasted almost an entire morning; Lawrence felt this was a public relations exercise and no action would be taken. The police advised Lawrence that there was nothing that they could do as the evidence remained the same, so unless someone new came forward, no further action would be taken.

Lawrence told us that subsequently, another victim did come forward. The police promised him that they would speak to Stanley, but they did not. When Lawrence asked the police why they did not proceed with this new case, he was advised there was no evidence to justify reopening the case.

Lawrence said that he later decided to speak to a journalist. The journalist interviewed him and said that his story was a strong one and that it would be published in the newspaper. His hope was that by running the story, more people would come forward. However, the article was then dropped with no explanation.

Lawrence remains frustrated with the police and criminal justice system for failing to prosecute his abuser. This frustration intensified when he found Stanley's glowing obituary. It was a damning reminder of the missed opportunities that allowed this perpetrator to carry on abusing; it is this that saddens Lawrence the most.

Edward

Edward told us that he was taken into care at a very young age. His father had disappeared when he was born, and his mother later died in hospital. Edward has no memory of his mother and no photographs of, or records about her. His earliest memory is being taken into care by the nuns who ran a convent.

Edward recalls abuse by the nuns, not of a sexual nature, but through conditioning. His first memory of this abuse was being in a dormitory with many other boys. Each bedtime, the boys were made to kneel by the bed to say their prayers and the Sisters would come round with the cane and hit the bottom of the bed. They would say, "Are you asleep?" One boy said "No Sister" and was given a hiding for it.



The nuns would not allow the boys to go to the toilet other than at set times. They were allowed to go in the morning but if a boy needed to go again, he would have to ask a nun. Sometimes they were desperate but made to wait, which Edward said was quite traumatic. This became important to Edward when he later developed cancer, which he blames on the allocated toilet times.

Edward used to wet the bed and did so until his mid-teens. He described the punishments as dreadful. On one occasion the Sister put him in one of the industrial washing machines with his wet sheets and shut the door; she did not switch it on, but left him there.

Edward was moved to an orphanage run by another religious Order and experienced the same type of conditioning

there. If he wet the bed, he would be humiliated in front of the other boys and punished. This happened regularly. The dormitory was called the 'wet boys' dormitory. It was the public humiliation in front of the other boys that was the worst.



Edward told us he experienced sexual abuse here. He was in the choir and one of the religious staff, Brother John, took a shine to him, taking him into his office where abuse took place. Edward was a pre-teen at the time and said he could not refuse to do what the staff member told him to. This went on intermittently. On another occasion, Edward woke up in the bed of another Brother. He believes the Brother had picked Edward up from his bed and taken him to his own bed, and that this happened to other boys too.

Edward told us he was in the chapel one day and noticed that a staff member was completely naked under his cassock. His thinks this explained why the Brother liked to hold boys close to him.

Edward said that it was not the norm to tell anyone about the sexual abuse - you just grew up with it. There were occasional visits from welfare officers but these were not to see if they were being treated well, and there was no opportunity to complain.



Edward feels he was never shown love as a boy. He said that he understood that you cannot put love into an institution, but there was not even any empathy. Assumptions were made that the religious

staff would show empathy but they did not, and Edward feels that the religious staff were men who went into religious organisations to avoid military service.



Edward said he was later fostered out to a family. They lived in a house and it transpired that they only fostered Edward in order to move to a larger house. He was returned by his foster family after a short time and was moved to a children's home run by non-religious staff. He spent the rest of his time in care in this home and was very happy.

Edward finds it hard to make friends and, in particular, male friends as he does not trust men. He would like to see changes that increase the frequency of visits to children in homes and ensure that there is a family member or someone that the child trusts in welfare meetings. He would also like to force authorities to keep full records for children in care.



Tracey

Tracey told us that she was physically abused by her mother and stepfather from when she was a baby and was sexually abused by her stepfather from early childhood child, through to her early teenage years. She reported the sexual abuse to a teacher accidentally, which resulted in the police and social services being contacted.

Tracey said a social worker told her to phone her mother and inform her that her stepfather was going to be arrested, and to tell her why. Tracey did not want to tell her mother about the sexual abuse and thought it should be the social worker's job.

Her stepfather was removed from the house and Tracey had to have a medical examination, but was not told it would involve an internal examination. When a male doctor examined her it caused her to panic and, as a result, the doctor said that there was no sign of abuse, so her stepdad was not prosecuted and returned home.

Tracey told us she kept running away to avoid him and eventually, her mother threw her out. A social worker took her

to a foster family, without any explanation. Early in her stay, Tracey recalls that she was in her room trying to process what had happened when her foster mother came upstairs and beat her. She said she expected this to happen, as "*that's what parents did*". That night, her foster father molested her and she thought this must be what all fathers do. As time went on, the sexual abuse would happen most nights but Tracey felt detached from it, because the abuse by her stepfather had been worse.

Tracey said her foster mother continued to physically abuse her, on one occasion, pushed her over. Tracey banged her head on the ground and thought she was going to die. She told her college what had happened and they called social services. The social worker was the same person she had spoken to before. The social worker sat Tracey down in front of her foster parents and asked her if they had abused her. Tracey went upstairs, her foster mother followed and told Tracey that if she told the social worker that she was lying, then the foster mother would love her like a real mother would. Tracey did what was she was asked because she wanted to be loved and no one had believed her before anyway.

Tracey was asked if she wanted to leave her foster parents' home and she said that she did. The foster parents were supposed to be specialist carers who should have been helping traumatised children, but Tracey feels they only fostered children for the money. She is aware of other children who reported abuse by the foster father but understands no action was ever taken. Tracey told us she tried to take part

in a private prosecution but social services refused to give a statement or take part.

Tracey feels broken by what happened to her. She thinks it has destroyed her life and that the abuse is a legacy she will never be able to get rid of it.

Whilst Tracey has made a life for herself, her mental health has suffered and she wants recognition that what happened to her was wrong. Tracey said that no one has ever been punished for what happened, except for her. Tracey would like her social worker to be held accountable as she did not do the right thing for Tracey. By not acting on information and by seeing her as a bad child, the social worker was complicit in the abuse.



Glenn

Glenn told the Inquiry he was taken away from his homeless mother when he was born, and taken into care. Due to her homeless status, his mother was denied any visitation rights and she had passed away by the time he left care. Glenn never knew the identity of his father.

He spent time in a number of different orphanages over a long period during which he suffered abuse, including sexual abuse. The children's homes in which Glenn lived were spread across the country. Glenn told us that whilst living in care at these homes, he suffered abuse at the hands of his carers and also at the hands of regular visitors approved by the homes.

These visitors were strangers to Glenn but they were allowed to take him out of the homes on unsupervised trips and abuse him.

Glenn was moved to one particular children's home and remembers this as the worst of all the homes he spent time in. He told us he experienced psychological, sexual and physical abuse, including what he described as torture. Children in the home were often locked in dark rooms, left alone for long periods of time and deprived of sleep and food. He said that staff would eat food which was meant for the children, whilst they were given porridge. He remembers scrabbling around under the staff tables at mealtimes in order to pick up scraps of food that had

fallen to the floor.

Regular beatings from staff took place, including staff members grabbing his genitals. Threats were made to the children ahead of any external inspections that were due to take place.

Glenn said he regularly attempted to escape from this home but he was always found and returned. During one such attempt, he was picked up by the police and taken to a local station where he reported the abuse he had experienced. But Glenn was not aware that the police never investigated the reports or intervened in any way. Glenn believes that the escapes and accusations of abuse eventually became too regular for the authorities to ignore. After this, the abuse ceased at this home but Glenn remained deeply affected by what he had suffered, which in turn affected his behaviour.

Glenn was moved to other children's homes, and said he experienced further physical beatings and sexual abuse there. He remembers being taken out on unsupervised trips by a male visitor and sexually abused. At the time, Glenn was confused and embarrassed by this behaviour but believed the perpetrator was showing love to him, and so he did not report it.

The police had contacted Glenn and asked him if he had been sexually abused at one of the homes, but Glenn did not feel ready

to admit this to anyone, as he felt ashamed of what had happened. Later, when Glenn reported his abuse to his GP, he also contacted the police who were open to listening to his experiences; something he hadn't found at the time of the abuse.

Glenn stated that the longer-term effects of the abuse he suffered led to him feeling that it was a waste of time reporting things to those in authority due to their inaction, alongside a loss of trust and confidence in institutions. As a result of his experiences, he described suffering anxiety and depression, being 'spooked' by love and affection and generally being in "self-destruct" mode.

Glenn is keen for justice to be served, not in monetary terms, but he wants the children's home provider to accept responsibility and give him an apology. In seeking the truth, he has been unable to access relevant information about the identities of staff members and visitors to the various homes in which he lived.

His perpetrators cannot be traced, are deceased or (according to the provider's records) do not exist.

Glenn feels that he is being accused of lying as he knows that these staff members and visitors did exist. He would like all the visitors' books held by the provider to be released so that he and others may identify who the visitors were and what names they provided. It is still unclear to Glenn what checks, if any, the provider made on visitors to the homes before allowing them continued access to children.



Ethan

Ethan's account was that as a child, he went to a private boarding school. Ethan was in sports teams and in the choir, and he now realises that he joined these so that he did not feel so isolated from his family.

Ethan told us he slept in a large dormitory which was supervised by a prefect, who was an older boy who slept with them in the dormitory. Ethan was considered "pretty" by the prefect and the abuse started shortly before he entered his teens. At first, it was kissing but this led on to sexual activity. The prefect later began "sharing" Ethan with other prefects, who were in their mid-teens.



Ethan recalls that other boys started to notice this interest in him. A housemaster picked up on this about a year after it had first started, but out of loyalty to the prefect, Ethan did not report the abuse directly and the housemaster did not take it further. Pupils had previously been expelled for this type of behaviour and Ethan did not want to see anyone expelled.



Ethan was in the school choir and, one Christmas, the choirmaster gave him a present. There was a time when Ethan was unwell and was confined to the school medical centre under the supervision of the nurse. After lights-out one night, the choirmaster visited him in the medical centre. He sat on Ethan's bed and started tickling him, but moved on to sexual touching. Ethan did not like this and the choirmaster commented that, from the

look on Ethan's face, he could see that Ethan did not like it, and he stopped.

Ethan told us the choirmaster later left the school at very short notice. Ethan thought that this was the last of the abuse. Later, however, he became aware that the choirmaster was working at another school where Ethan understands that he had continued to abuse.



As Ethan progressed through school, he matured sexually and entered into a relationship with another boy. Despite the housemaster knowing and questioning Ethan about the relationship, no action was taken to stop the relationship. The housemaster did, however, start to invite Ethan to his room where they would drink alcohol together most evenings. Ethan now realises that the housemaster was grooming him, but at the time it felt like a privilege.

In his last few years at the school, the housemaster used to invite Ethan out to lunch at the weekends, but he always ensured that someone else was present so the school did not become suspicious. One evening, when he was alone with the housemaster, the housemaster touched Ethan inappropriately. But after Ethan pushed him away, he stopped. After this, the relationship changed.



As a child and in the school environment, Ethan felt the attention received by being available for sexual favours made him "special" in the eyes of those in authority at the school, including monitors, prefects

and staff. However, the result was that Ethan failed his exams the following year and failed to get into the university that he had hoped to attend.



As an adult, Ethan frequently moves jobs as, after the initial “excitement” of a new role, he finds it hard to concentrate on his work. He has had a difficult life financially and has never owned a property. He is estranged from his child, which he finds very upsetting. He sees this and his other problems as related to his abuse as a child.



Ben

As a young boy, Ben loved the local church and joined the choir, often performing at concerts. Ben thought the choirmaster, Robin, seemed like a “nice, modern chap” and he was glad to be invited to his home to see the train set that he had been told about. But on Ben’s first visit, he was sexually abused by Robin and said that this abuse continued at various locations, including the church, over the next few years. During this time, Robin met Ben’s parents and on one occasion, took Ben to his parents’ house and abused him there.

Ben thought it was normal at the time, though he did feel something was wrong. He never told anyone about what was happening - he would not have known who to tell, or how to find the language to describe it.

Ben told us that as he grew into adulthood, he moved away from home, married, had children and forged a successful career. He somehow found a way of forgetting what had happened to him as a child and got on with his life. But, many years later, he was watching a news item about sexual abuse in care homes and, a few days later, he was sent some childhood photos of himself and some friends through social media. These two events triggered memories of Ben’s own abuse and, aware that Robin could still be abusing others, he contacted his local police force to report what had happened to him.

After interviewing Ben, the police contacted Robin who had, by then, moved to a different part of the country. The Crown Prosecution Service put a case together which was due to go to the Crown Court, but Robin pleaded guilty before the trial. The judge commented that the abuse had happened a long time ago, before placing him on the Sex Offenders’ Register and giving him a fine. Ben was disappointed in the outcome and commented, “I’ve had bigger parking fines”.

Ben thought that reporting his abuse would be the end of the matter, but said it was the start of years of pain. He discovered that some people at the church knew of Robin’s abuse but gave him another post in the same diocese. Ben also discovered that his own parents had been aware of the abuse and had asked a family member to tell Robin to leave Ben alone.

“Looking at the map of my abuse, everybody who knew...nobody stopped it.”

Ben told us that this knowledge, coupled with the memories of what had happened to him, prompted a severe psychological breakdown. He has had to take early retirement because of his fragile psychological state, although he is still active in his local community. Ben feels better but told the Inquiry, “I’m a shell of the man I was...if you haven’t been through it, it’s very difficult to understand”.

Derek

Derek was sent to a boarding school by his parents. The abuse began when one of Derek's teachers asked him to go to his room. The teacher was very friendly and this developed into a sexual relationship. At the time, Derek felt there was no cruelty involved, he felt guilty for encouraging favourable treatment and for doing something that he knew was wrong. Derek was intensely embarrassed and did not want to speak to anyone about it, but had no one he could speak to anyway.

Derek told us that later, another teacher at the school was arrested and convicted of sexual offences involving children. Derek only became aware of this when his mother saw the news in a local paper and wanted to be sure he was not one of the victims. There was no further mention of this teacher and Derek was not aware of any attempt to see whether he had any other victims at the school.

The abuse by the teacher continued for some time but after Derek finished his exams, the teacher disappeared. Derek did not report any of his abuse and went on to have a successful career. He married and had children. He has never spoken to his wife about his experience and said that he is not inclined to now.

Derek wrote to the school to disclose what happened to him. He wanted to seek their assurance that a proper inquiry would take place at the school. He found their response unsatisfactory, and said that none of the correct procedures for

dealing with these types of allegations were followed. Derek did not want to sue the school, he just wanted there to be a proper investigation, but when the school's insurers became involved, Derek decided that "*life was too short*" to carry on and stopped pursuing it. Instead, Derek chose to share his experience with the Inquiry.

Derek believes that in abuse cases, we need to separate the issue of compensation from the fundamental issue of the abuse. Derek considers that this is crucially important because if people's minds are concentrated on compensation, they will not be looking at solution and cure.

Bobby

Bobby told us that his parents were alcoholics and had a violent relationship, which he witnessed. The family were known to social services and he was in and out of care as a child, usually as a result of crisis management.

Bobby was placed in foster care and, on one occasion, met a lovely foster family but felt that emotionally, he could not handle how nice they were. Social services decided he needed to be placed with a specialist foster family. The first time he met this family, he did not like them. He said that the foster father used to mock him. The social worker at the meeting found this funny and laughed as well. Bobby told the social worker that he did not want to stay with this family, but he was left there.

Bobby said that he made a comment to his foster parents' child one day, and his foster mother violently attacked him. She told him it was no wonder his mother did not want him. He did not understand why he had been attacked as, previously, there had always been a reason why he was beaten, but his foster mother was often violent and erratic. The next day he woke up and, from his bed, he could see into his foster parents' bed. He could tell that his foster father was masturbating. Bobby had previously witnessed his foster father touching his genitals in public and had

challenged this behaviour, but was told that this touching was for comfort.

After a few months, another foster child arrived. She was also physically abused which drew the attention away from him. His foster mother would use chores and rewards to pit him against his foster sister.

Bobby described a particular day when his foster mother sent him upstairs to see his foster father in their bedroom. The father told him to lie down so they could have a chat and at first, he was nice and made Bobby feel comfortable. But then he started to touch Bobby's leg and then his genitals.

Bobby did not stop him. He said there were social workers in the house as this was happening.

He recalls that after the sexual abuse started, the foster father stopped the foster mother from physically abusing him, but the sexual abuse escalated over time and happened on a daily basis, including rape. Bobby began to meet strangers to have sex, often dressed in his school uniform, and his foster father would join in.

Bobby told us his foster father had talked to him about other children he was abusing or had abused. Bobby asked his foster father whether he also abused his biological son, but his foster dad got really angry and said he would never do that to his real son.

Bobby explained that he did not tell

anyone at the time about what was happening, as he had been told he would only be in that house for a short period. Bobby would often run away and the police would catch him and ask why he was running away from nice people. He did not expect to be believed if he did say what was happening, as he knew that the social worker had labelled him a liar and manipulative - he had seen this in his file.

Bobby created a plan to escape and asked his social worker to facilitate a return to his biological parents, which was agreed. He knew he would be placed there on probation for three months and planned to run away after that. He followed through with his plan and ran away, but was caught and put in overnight accommodation. He was then put in a children's home and developed a good relationship with one of the staff members at the home.

Bobby thought about the abuse he suffered and decided to report it anonymously. However, a few weeks later he was contacted by the police and social workers who asked if he had sent the letter, which he denied.

An investigation by social services and the police followed, and the staff member at Bobby's home helped him to disclose the information, but he only told them some of what had happened. When he was being interviewed by the police, he did not disclose certain details about the abuse, but the police officer then turned off the tape and asked him about specific incidents. Bobby told us he confirmed they had happened, but was told no further action would be taken as the

disclosure was off the record.

When Bobby was in his late teens, the police passed the file to the Crown Prosecution Service, who said it was not in the public interest to prosecute.

He was worried that the foster parents would be allowed to foster again so he sought out another victim that he knew about to encourage him to disclose, but he refused to do so and Bobby felt powerless as a result.

Albert

Albert told the Inquiry that his parents were very religious and sent him to a religious junior and secondary school, wanting him to have a stable education.

He told us that the junior school had a terrible culture of violence. Some of the church staff and Brothers inflicted physical punishments and abuse on the children, including some particularly vulnerable young boys. Albert said that lay teachers and staff at the school tended not to stay around for long, as they were unhappy about the physical abuse taking place.



Albert began receiving extra attention from two of the religious staff at the school. They would take Albert into empty rooms around the school, where they would sexually abuse him. This would happen regularly. Sometimes they would stop if Albert was getting sore. They threatened Albert, telling him not to tell anyone about it and he described feeling “frightened to death” because he feared the general violence going on in the school. He could not disclose the abuse to anyone as he felt his parents would not have believed him. When he told his father about physical punishments, this was considered normal for children misbehaving at school.

Albert has always had a sense that other children were abused in the same way at the school, not only by the two staff members who abused him but also possibly by other staff. He never witnessed the abuse of others, nor did any other boys tell him about anything, but Albert never lost that feeling. He also feels certain that the head and senior

teachers must have known about it. He knows that some parents complained about the physical punishment and thinks it likely that others might have complained about sexual abuse.



As a consequence of the sexual abuse, Albert suffered from a medical condition as a teenager and a young man that resulted in him undergoing a range of medical tests. Albert described this as a worry for him at the time, but no cause was found. This also contributed to him being unable to finish his degree at university.

Albert thought for a while that he should contact the church about what had happened to him and to find out what they had done to stop it happening again. He sought to do so via a victim support group. He felt the church did not really want to know about it. He continues to feel he would not be believed and believes that there were too many barriers, and this was why he did not pursue it.



Albert has struggled to tell people about his experiences; he felt it would damage his relationships with others or distress them, or they would not believe him. To this day, with the exception of professionals, he has only told close members of his family. It is only as a result of work with a psychologist in the last few years that Albert began to realise the way the abuse had affected him physically, socially and emotionally.

When Albert later heard about the Inquiry,

he told us he wanted to come forward to help us come to conclusions and make recommendations that would help prevent such abuse happening to children in the future. He feels that: *"If prevention was put at the heart of things and children were put first and we change culture, then some of these things won't go on."*



The police have been in contact with Albert about what happened but he agreed that it would be very difficult to obtain evidence after such a long time and that the abusers themselves, as well as other staff or pupils from the school, may now be very elderly or dead. His relationships with his family have improved, he feels better about himself and he recognises he was a victim. After such a long period of denial, he feels that he has dealt with it.



Lisa

Lisa explained to the Inquiry that she suffered abuse by Mick, a teacher who had ingratiated himself with her family. Lisa said that everyone liked and respected Mick, who organised a lot of school trips and activities. He often organised impromptu day trips or activities for Lisa, or invited her to attend events he had arranged.

The first time she was abused was on one of those trips and Lisa wonders how adults did not find it strange that this man was with a group of teenagers.

She was a young teenager at that time and said the abuse lasted until she was in her late teens. Lisa feels that this is a very confusing time for young people; the abuse was wrapped up in the adventure of the day trips and activities and she said that she did enjoy the attention she received from Mick. Lisa even thought for a brief time that she was his girlfriend.

Lisa described the abuse as having had a big impact on her life, even though she does not want it to. She said that she has made the decision to be single and on her own after having children, as it was just too difficult to be in a relationship. She also feels sad that the abuse has had a direct impact on her children too, as they are no longer in a “usual family”.

Lisa did tell her father about the abuse that happened to her and said he provided her with “*the greatest gift*” as, although he was shocked, he believed her instantly.

Lisa attended counselling due to the difficulties in her personal life and shared what had happened to her as a child with the counsellor, who suggested that she talk to a solicitor, which Lisa did. Around this time, she told a relation what had happened to her. Although the relation did not mention it at the time, they later told Lisa that they had also been abused by Mick. Lisa was shocked, as she and her relation were very close. She said, “*it was all so secretive, so cunning.*”

The solicitor told Lisa that the police would believe what she was saying, but said that the cross-examination might be difficult for her. She decided at this stage that she would not go any further with it, as she felt she might be responsible for someone going to prison.

She knows now that she would not have been responsible.

Even though she did not pursue the case, she was aware that Mick was still a teacher. Lisa told us that she and another family member went to see the school where he was teaching, but she felt dismissed by the school’s response, which was that everyone loved Mick. Lisa does not know what the school did with the information.

Lisa recalls that some years later she decided to report the abuse to the police, who arranged for her to be interviewed and to provide a statement. Members of her family were interviewed by the police and provided names of other young people they suspected may have been

abused by Mick. The police did interview Mick and the file was sent to the Crown Prosecution Service but there was deemed to be insufficient evidence to pursue the case, although Lisa was assured that the allegation would remain on Mick's record.

Lisa decided to contact the police again and provided more information as she did not feel that the police knew the whole story of her abuse. She went to the police station and handed in another statement about what had happened to her, but the police officer just took it away and typed it up.

There was no one to talk to and Lisa feels that there should be someone who is trained to work specifically in this area to support victims and survivors who are reporting sexual abuse.

Lisa said that she found out from the internet that Mick was due to stand trial. She contacted the police immediately and asked why they had not told her that this was happening. Lisa felt "deceived" by the police but the officer said that she was not in a position to share this information.

Lisa told the police that she would be prepared to give evidence at Mick's trial, but heard nothing further.

Giles

Giles attended a Catholic boarding school. He told us he was abused by Arthur, who was not a member of the teaching staff but was associated with the school. Arthur was a musician and would come to Mass to sing and conduct.

Giles was a very good singer and described himself as a typical “cute little choir boy”. One day, Giles was asked to go to Arthur’s room; Arthur was playing a piano and wanted him to sing. Initially, Arthur had non-sexual contact with Giles but over the course of one or two visits, the contact got more intimate.

Later, Arthur would make Giles perform sex acts on him. Giles recalls that this happened regularly over three or four years and followed the same pattern of Giles receiving a note instructing him to go to Arthur’s room. The abuse just stopped one day and Giles cannot recall why, or whether it was because Arthur left. No one else ever knew.

Giles told us that he had a major breakdown and received psychiatric treatment. He saw a psychiatrist as part of his treatment. He described the care he received as “rather good”; he had bottled everything up for years but now felt more at peace.

Giles decided to contact the local church safeguarding officer, who advised him that they were participating in an investigation with the police involving Arthur. The safeguarding officer asked if he would be interested in speaking to the police and

Giles agreed. The interview with the police lasted a long time, but to Giles it seemed like only 10 minutes.

Giles believes a number of people had made accusations about abuse at the school over the years, but none had been able to make a formal statement for various reasons. When Giles came forward, the other victims and survivors gained confidence to give statements. However, Arthur killed himself. Giles felt really sorry about what had happened to Arthur, but he knew what Arthur had done to him and other victims and survivors.

Giles wrote to the safeguarding officer and the Archbishop last year asking for a meeting but he received a response, copied to the church’s lawyer, saying he should “*put the accusations in writing*” and “*bring to your meeting the correct people*.” Giles feels that this showed no compassion or Christian care.

Giles told us the police were able to access Arthur’s personnel file, which was very lengthy and showed clearly that the church knew what was going on. Arthur had been moved from place to place by the church; Giles believes this was the diocese’s solution to Arthur’s propensity to abuse children.

Giles does not blame priests in general for what happened, but thinks Arthur was a paedophile who happened to be a priest, rather than being a paedophile because he was a priest.

Janet

Janet told us her parents separated when she and her brothers were very young. They lived in many different places from this time onwards. Her father couldn't look after the children so asked a member of his family to care for them, but all of them were placed in foster care a few years later, where they remained until they were around 18 years old.

Janet says it was while she was in foster care that she was abused both physically and sexually. She was sexually abused by her foster father, Travis, frequently in front of her brothers. All of the children also suffered from very severe beatings by Travis and were frequently locked in isolated parts of the house. Janet and her brothers shared no love or attachment with the foster parents.

Whilst living with their foster family, Janet would sleep in the same bed as her brother.

When they heard Travis coming into the room they would both pretend to be asleep, but Travis would lift Janet out of the bed and make her touch him sexually.

When Janet got back into bed afterwards her brother would always say, "everything is going to be okay".

Janet told us her abuse progressed to rape. The first time this happened was in her foster parents' bed, and Janet believes her foster mother must have known what

was happening. The abuse continued whilst she lived with her foster family. By then she felt 'conditioned'. She became pregnant twice by Travis, but lost both babies.

Janet told us her brothers were removed from the foster home as they had been beaten so violently by Travis that their school called social services. She cannot understand why social services left her in the home even though they knew that she was also being abused, and she believes this was documented in her care file.

Janet says she later reported the sexual abuse to the police and received an unannounced visit from two male officers late one evening. She says the police have since told her that she was visited by two male officers because of a lack of trained female officers.

Janet was married for many years and told us that the impact of the abuse affected her marriage. Janet blamed herself for the abuse, she self-harmed and was drug and alcohol dependent for many years. Janet's life took a downward turn and she described an overwhelming feeling of having no hope. She realised that she needed to sort her life out and so she made a plan, part of which included sharing her experience with the Inquiry, which Janet has now done successfully.

Janet feels let down by the police and by social services and blames them for the impact which the sexual abuse had on her dysfunctional life.

Beverley

Beverley said she was born into a large religious family. She told us she had to go to church every week and she attended the church school. One day, a new priest, Edwin, came to the church and Beverley's mother 'took him under her wing'.

Beverley recalls that Edwin would visit their home frequently and often came for dinner. He fitted in with the family and was very fun to be around. But when Beverley was in her early adolescence, Edwin started getting very familiar with her. It quickly moved from playing and tickling to more inappropriate touching but, at that stage, Beverley didn't realise what was happening.



Beverley attended a church youth group when she was still young and, at the end of the session, Edwin would take her home. On the journey home, Edwin began to stop in quiet spots, saying that the car needed "cooling down" or something similar, and would start touching Beverley in a sexual way. Over time, he would gradually increase the touching. Beverley would tell him to stop but he would not, telling Beverley, "*This is what I have to do.*" Although Edwin never actually raped her, Beverley says that he would physically hurt her and she would feel suffocated. After these incidents in the car, Edwin would drive Beverley back home and take her indoors to her parents' home as if nothing had happened.

Beverley told us there were also occasions when he touched her whilst visiting the family at their home, and on occasions Edwin would masturbate where she could see him. Beverley knew it was not right,

but she had no-one to confide in; she felt that her mother would not believe her and that somehow it was her own fault.



Beverley recalls that the abuse continued until she was in her early teens, when Edwin was transferred to another region. Beverley got on with her life; she trained for a job, met her husband, set up a successful business and had children. After the birth of one of her children, Beverley experienced post-natal depression. She became very ill and stopped eating; suffering from an eating disorder, and was in and out of hospital for long periods of time. At that point she had never told anyone about the abuse she suffered as a child.

Beverley felt so ashamed but was worried for other girls who might have been at risk from Edwin and she did not know what to do. She could not cope with her feelings and eventually Beverley realised that if she wanted to get better, she needed to tell someone about her experience. Beverley's experience of disclosing her abuse to a number of professionals was not positive; they either did not take her seriously or made her tell other members of her family what had happened to her by mentioning the abuse in front of them.



Beverley made a complaint to the police about Edwin. She was interviewed by the police and gave a full account of what had happened. Beverley recalls that the police seemed very helpful and said that they would "*have him behind bars before long*".

The police investigation lasted some time. Finally, they were told by a detective that the police were not going to pursue the case despite wanting to, because they had received 'instructions from above' that there was not enough evidence; it was Beverley's word against Edwin's, and the church was one of the hardest institutions to fight in court. Beverley recalls she was devastated by the news and felt that Edwin "*had got away with it*" and that he had "*won*".



Beverley subsequently met with senior church officials who offered to pay for her to undergo further therapy. This was the first time that Beverley had proper therapy and the therapist was fantastic; she is still helping Beverley today.

Beverley was awarded a large sum in a settlement with the church, although the majority of the money went towards legal fees.

Beverley suffered from psychological problems for many years and made several attempts to take her life. She believes that this was the result of the impact of the abuse. Beverley feels that Edwin has got away with abusing her. She wants to change the system so that people who have suffered non-recent abuse are treated as if it happened yesterday, so that people will not be so afraid of coming forward or worry about what society will think of them.

Anita

As a very young child Anita was regularly taken to visit her grandparents, she told the Inquiry. Initially, all of Anita's family would be in one room but then one of her family members used to take her into a different room and this is when the abuse would occur.

Anita had a medical condition that meant that she was frequently in and out of hospital and, during one consultation, she told the doctor that she was "*hurting down below*" and the doctor realised she had been sexually abused.

But, instead of reporting this, the doctor advised Anita's mother to "blow on" the parts that were sore. Anita recalls her mother thought she was being "dramatic" and she continued to be taken to her grandparents' home, where the family member would also be present.

Anita told us that, as a child, she was so distressed by the abuse that she attempted suicide by taking an overdose. She was taken to the local hospital again, but was never asked why she had taken the overdose. She was later referred to a child psychologist and remembers very well telling the psychologist about the abuse, and being very angry that the psychologist blamed her grandparents for this happening at their home.

Anita remains angry that a child could take an overdose and be admitted to hospital

yet not be asked why they had taken an overdose - she feels the failure to take action enabled the abuse to continue for another five years.

Anita recalls the abuse continued until she was a teenager, when she learnt one day that her mother planned to leave her at her grandparents' house with the abusive family member for the weekend. Anita could not bear for that to happen and she told her sibling about the abuse. Her sibling told their mother and it was agreed that the family member would not be at her grandparents' home that weekend. Anita's mother sought advice regarding the abuse and was told how difficult it was to secure a prosecution for child sexual abuse, so not to contact the police, but to keep Anita away from that particular family member.

As a young adult, Anita began to experience horrific flashbacks of being raped as a young child. She had undergone counselling, but this did not work for Anita. She turned to illegal drugs to block out the horrific memories of the abuse. Anita remembers that all the girls with whom she came into contact during this time had suffered abuse.

Anita challenged her mother about why her abuse as a child had never been reported to the police and her mother replied that there was nothing to stop her reporting it herself. Anita describes this as a "lightbulb moment".

She saw her general practitioner the following day and told him about the abuse. She then reported it to the police, whom Anita describes as being “*absolutely fantastic*” and really supporting her.

During the police investigation, Anita learnt that the family member had also abused other family members, and that her medical records were ‘littered’ with evidence of her being sexually abused, the earliest record dating back to when she was very young.

Anita told us the family member was charged with numerous offences but he pleaded not guilty and Anita and others had to give evidence at his trial.

Anita describes the court process as traumatic but, despite this, she found the courage to tell the court what her family member had done to her. He was convicted and received a custodial sentence.

As a result of reporting what had happened to her, Anita no longer has contact with part of her family, but she feels the outcome of the trial really helped her emotionally. She had feared that she would not have coped if the family member had not been convicted.

Since Anita’s family member has been in prison, she has felt some sense of closure but she still struggles with how much her family had covered up the abuse and how much she had been let down by professionals.

“There’s nothing worse than telling a person to help you and to sit waiting to be rescued, and they don’t come.”

Trevor

Trevor wanted to come forward now to share his experience of child sexual abuse. It started when Trevor was a young teenager and he was raped by the vicar inside the church. He clearly remembers that whilst this was happening, all he could see was the image of Jesus on the cross and he thought he would go to hell, as Jesus had been watching him.

After the rape, Trevor told an adult what had happened. He says the adult was incredulous, saying, “*how dare you say that against a man of the cloth?*” and Trevor’s own family didn’t believe him when he told them what had happened. No action was taken in response to Trevor’s disclosure.

Trevor was later taken into a custodial institution where he describes being sexually, mentally and physically abused. He was designated a dormitory leader, which was one of the worst things that could have happened, as dormitory leaders were responsible for all the other children’s behaviour in the dormitory and were treated with violence if anything went wrong in the dormitory. Trevor told us he was beaten and had to thank the officer who carried out the beating.

While Trevor was resident in the custodial institution, the vicar who had abused and raped him came to see him. Trevor recalls being in the visitors’ room with the vicar and crying as he was upset about receiving this visit. The vicar started to sexually touch him under the table.

When Trevor left the custodial institution, he told the police what had happened and

they said that Trevor must have “*asked for it*” and told him to go home, unless he wanted go back to the institution. When Trevor reported the vicar to the police again, the vicar denied that he had ever known Trevor, but later the police found evidence to corroborate Trevor’s account. When the vicar was finally charged, he pleaded not guilty and his defence team tried to discredit Trevor throughout the trial. Despite what the vicar had done to him, Trevor felt sorry for him when he was found guilty.

Trevor told us that he later found out that other people had previously reported this same abuser to the church, but nothing had been done about it. He believes the vicar who abused him had worked in various positions with children both in and out of the church, and outside the UK.

Trevor said that after the trial, he received a letter from a senior church leader apologising unreservedly and offering compensation. But he feels this was too little, too late. He told the church that they could not compensate him for what had happened, nor for the fact that his mother still believed he was a liar when she died.

Trevor lives with the impact of the abuse on a daily basis; he finds that certain smells or songs can bring the memories back. Trevor told us he has suffered severe mental health problems and tried to take his life on numerous occasions. He feels that sometimes the actual abuse itself can almost become the abuser; that being a victim of abuse is such a lonely

experience, as you do not know who to tell and are frightened that you will not be believed if you do tell anyone. He does not want anyone to go through what he went through.

After the abuse, Trevor blocked everything out, including his childhood. He lost all of his memories prior to the abuse, but the memories are slowly coming back and he realises that before the abuse he had a lovely childhood. These memories are treasured by Trevor.

Sally

Sally told us she was a teenager when she was abused by an employee at her school. One of the teachers at the school was friends with the employee and encouraged her to meet him. The employee bought presents for her, but Sally did not know about grooming at the time and did not recognise that she was being groomed.

Sally says that one day she was walking home with a group of young people and as they passed the employee's home, he came outside and started talking to her. He separated Sally from the group and took her into his home, and once there he raped her. The abuse only happened once, but the employee subsequently mocked Sally when he saw her in school and when she walked past his home. This mocking helped to silence Sally and ensure that she did not report what happened.

Sally believes the teacher encouraged the relationship between her and the employee because she had spoken up in class and expressed a different opinion to his. She thinks the teacher wanted her to be punished as a result.

Sally believes the teacher knew what had happened to her, but no action was taken.

Sally described the impact of the abuse as devastating; it has affected her confidence, her personality was annihilated and she became suicidal. She felt alone with what happened and was not able to report it; she blamed herself and thought of herself as a "slut" and a

"hussy", and thought that if she told her family, they would also blame her. Sally's education was also affected as a result of the abuse and she left school with no qualifications.

Sally said she intends to report her experience to help prevent others being abused and to seek justice. She thinks social justice is important and that is one of the reasons she chose to share her experience.

Sally told us she believes the compulsory reporting of child abuse should be implemented. She thinks it is not sufficient for people to have a moral or social obligation to report abuse, but there also needs to be an external pressure, such as a legal requirement. Sally believes that it needs to be the responsibility of the person who knows about the abuse or who receives the disclosure to tell those authorities that can help the child, such as the police, and not just to escalate the disclosure internally within that organisation. She believes that there need to be sanctions for not reporting a disclosure or details of abuse. This is the most important change that Sally would like to see.

Sally also considers that there needs to be better sex education in schools. She believes that should include information about friendships and stress that relationships do not need to be sexual.



Cliff

Cliff was arrested by the police as a teenager for petty theft. As a result, social services obtained an interim care order and he was put into care and placed in a children's home, where he shared a dormitory with other boys. He told us that one of these boys began bullying him and involved him in sexual behaviour. The abuse happened both in and around the home.

A new member of staff, Larry, joined the home and Cliff told him what was happening, but Larry was dismissed because the perpetrator had made a complaint against him. The head of the home told Cliff that his claim against his abuser was dismissed.



Cliff told us that he took up running and had a regular route from the home. It took him past a particular place which he would stop at and engage in sexual behaviour with men. Over time he began to undertake sexual activity for money, and was subsequently arrested for indecency offences and sent to prison in his late teenage years for a short while. Despite a care order still being in place when he came out, Cliff did not receive any support from social services when he was released from prison. He believes this was because he was also being supervised by the Probation Service and there was no joined-up action between the two services.

Cliff told us he took an overdose and was referred to a psychiatrist. He reported to his social worker that he was thinking about committing suicide. The social worker was not very experienced.

Cliff has not had a good relationship with social services, starting with his time in care but recently with his own children as well. He believes that social services are "*a law unto themselves*".



Cliff believes that children in care need to be listened to, but by people with experience of working with children, who can distinguish between storytelling and the truth. He thinks children in care need to be looked after for all the time that they are in care and followed up with after they leave care.

Charlotte

Charlotte grew up in a strict religious family. She told the Inquiry that from a young age she was sexually abused by her father and others. When Charlotte found the courage to report the abuse during church confession to Father Callum, a priest, she hoped to finally get help. Instead, Father Callum approached her father and they began sexually abusing her together and as part of a paedophile group of church members. Charlotte recalls that the abuse became more brutal and horrific after Father Callum became involved.

Charlotte told us abuse would take place regularly in the church itself, sometimes by Father Callum alone, and at other times involving several other perpetrators. Father Callum would assault her whilst praying, and threatened her that she would go to hell if she ever told anyone. She believes that fear was a typical method of control for the church.

Charlotte told us she was terrified by Father Callum's behaviour and threats; she came to believe her soul was evil and mentally tried to disassociate from it to try and cope with what was happening to her.

She was also told that those close to her would die if she told anyone. Her mother was the only loving person in her life at the time and she believed every word of Father Callum's threats.

She would even go and sit by her mother's bedside and watch her sleeping, to check she was still breathing.

Charlotte told us she was also physically threatened to prevent her disclosing the abuse. She was also taken to remote places in the area and threatened with being chained up there where the rats would come and eat her.

Charlotte told us that in her teenage years she became pregnant after being raped by a group of the abusers, but the baby died. Charlotte wanted to tell her mother but couldn't for fear that her mother would die as a consequence.

Charlotte retained her faith, despite all that had happened to her and she later went away to a convent to become a nun. During one holiday period she had difficulty catching transport home and was invited to stay overnight at the home of someone she thought was a safe person, a female friend she had been introduced to through the convent. That night, the woman tried to sexually abuse Charlotte, which Charlotte believed was her fault. When she returned to the convent, she confessed about it. At the end of the following term, Charlotte was told she could not return to the convent.

Several years ago, Charlotte says she approached the diocese to obtain financial assistance to pay for the significant cost of the therapy she needed. The diocese agreed to pay some compensation if she had evidence that her allegations were credible. For this reason, Charlotte reported the abuse to the police but, due to the lasting fear she had of Father Callum, and the fact that he was not in prison at the time, she could only bring herself to disclose limited details about the abuse. Father Callum was eventually

convicted of sexual offences against others but those committed against her were used as plea bargaining and were ordered to lie on file instead.

Charlotte believes the diocese had failed to follow its own safeguarding policies and procedures with regard to Father Callum. They undertook an independent review but said that no evidence was found. Charlotte feels there have been continuous attempts by the church to cover up her abuse.

She is very angry that the church continues to say publicly how seriously it is taking sexual abuse carried out within the church and the protection of the church community, yet her own experiences show this to be entirely untrue.

As a result of the abuse, Charlotte says she has suffered in many ways; including physically, psychologically, emotionally, financially and spiritually. Charlotte experiences flashbacks, an intense fear of evil, darkness and the devil, and a fear of the death of those close to her.



Ronnie

Ronnie told us that, as a young boy, he was kidnapped by a stranger who dragged him into a derelict building and abused him; he gave Ronnie some money to buy some sweets and left. The incident affected Ronnie and he began avoiding going to school and started committing petty crimes, which eventually resulted in him being placed in a children's custodial institution, where he remained for several years.

In the school, the boys slept in a large dormitory with housemasters based in a room at each end. Ronnie told us the housemaster would abuse the boys. He recalls a boy crying in the bed next to his. The housemaster took the child from his bed and took him to his room, during which time he heard the boy scream. The housemaster then returned the boy to his bed where he continued to cry for hours.

The dormitory was poorly lit. Sometimes the boys would come upstairs to find the light not working and Ronnie believes this was to make it easier for the housemaster to abuse them. At night, Ronnie and a friend worked together to ensure that they were both as tightly tucked in the bed as they could be, so that the housemaster could not abuse them.

Ronnie believes that the housemaster abused him for both physical and sexual gratification. On dry summer days, the boys would be taken on walks. Often during these walks, the housemaster would appear to supervise the group for the rest of the trip. Once alone with the children, the housemaster would almost always drag one child off and abuse them.

During his time at the school, Ronnie had little contact with his parents. His mother visited once and Ronnie told her that the housemaster was hurting him; she responded that Ronnie must be doing something wrong and was being punished. The housemaster would write negative reports about Ronnie so that he wouldn't be allowed to go home at weekends.

Ronnie remembers that one morning, he went upstairs to have a smoke but found the door to the dormitory closed and locked. He could hear crying from inside the room and on looking through the keyhole, Ronnie witnessed a boy being abused by the housemaster. Ronnie fetched a member of staff who ran upstairs, returning with the housemaster who looked dishevelled and embarrassed. Ronnie remembers seeing the housemaster leave the school with his suitcase. The incident was never mentioned again.

Ronnie was a member of the school choir and, at Christmas, they went to sing at a local event. Ronnie told us he was horrified to see his old housemaster working there; the housemaster grabbed him by the ear, but didn't hit him. That was the last time he saw the housemaster before leaving the custodial institution. He could not understand why no-one in authority at the school could see what was happening, and believes other teachers must have known about the abuse.

As an adult, Ronnie saw a television appeal by police for victims of abuse at the institution; on coming forward he was told that another teacher had also abused

children at the institution. Ronnie became part of a prosecution process against his old housemaster.

Ronnie describes the court case as an ordeal for him; there was very little support for the witnesses and no-one talked to them. The case was stayed by the judge for legal reasons. Ronnie was asked if he wanted to participate in a civil compensation case but he declined as he had gone to the police to "*put him away, not for money*".

Samuel

Samuel was born into a religious organisation which he described as a cult. He told us that the organisation focused on those parts of the Bible concerning discipline and, in his opinion, took this to the extreme, focusing on the parts of the Bible that suited them. Samuel described life as harsh for him and the other children in the religious group. Punishments were frequent and extreme, with severe beatings and violence, which were not only delivered by Samuel's parents, but also by anyone in a leadership position.

Samuel feels that there was an underlying sexual element to everything the elders in the group did. Everything was about control, manipulation and gratification. He told us that children were raped by elders, who would also beat the children with canes, and describes his experiences as "*traumatic*", saying he was subject to sexual, physical and mental abuse during the period he was with the organisation.

As a teenager, Samuel was made to live away from his parents in quarters with single men. He told us the religious organisation was keen to recruit people who were marginalised in society. One Saturday night, some new recruits had been brought back to the house where Samuel was living, many were straight "*off the street*" and they stayed overnight in the house. He recalls that he woke up to find one recruit touching him under his quilt. He did not know what to do and was terrified. He got back to sleep but was woken again by the same man; he pushed the hand away and summoned the courage to run out of the house.

Samuel told us he ran to his parents' house, told his parents what had just happened, and they informed the more senior members of the organisation.

Samuel wanted to call the police but it was decided by the organisation that "we should forgive" the recruit and they let him leave and nothing more was said or done.

Samuel said his sister was abused by one of the elders of the group, who was later sent to prison for the abuse. But he believes the abuser is now back with the organisation, where he lives with his own children and other families.

Samuel told us that, years later, he reported it to his local police but because of jurisdictional issues, the investigation was passed on to a second police force who he believes mishandled the case. He believes there are further allegations of widespread child sexual abuse having taken place in this organisation and neither the police nor the local authority are dealing with this appropriately, despite his continued requests for action to be taken.

Shane

As a teenager, Shane was sent to a children's custodial institution after committing several crimes. He told us that from the moment he arrived at the institution, he was physically abused by staff there, and was beaten and kicked for little or no reason.

Shane told us he slept in a shared dormitory with other young people. One night, a member of staff, Duncan, came in and sat on his bed. Duncan began talking in double-entendres and making suggestive comments which confused Shane, who didn't know how to process all that was happening to him. Very soon afterwards the sexual abuse began.



Duncan was in charge of the kitchen at the institution and as such, had total control over an area of relative isolation in the institution. Duncan would select residents to go and work there. The kitchen was seen as a bit of a haven from the rest of the regime but for Shane it was anything but, as Duncan would abuse him there. He said Duncan created an environment where the young men were separated off and isolated from others, and Duncan sexually abused him regularly, including taking photographs of him. Shane is certain those photographs still exist out there somewhere, even after all this time, which bothers him a lot.

Shane said that, on another occasion, abuse took place in a house rather than in the institution itself. He has questioned many times how he was so easily removed from the custodial institution. Shane remembers passing through the official exit which was manned by a member of

staff. He believes this man must have known why Shane was being removed by Duncan, or someone else higher up in the institution had authorised his removal from the premises that day and, therefore, probably knew something about Duncan's activities.

Towards the end of his stay at the institution, Duncan lost interest in Shane and the abuse stopped. Before he left the institution, Duncan had arranged for Shane to meet another man once he had left. Shane could not say no to the suggestion at the time as he was still incarcerated, but he did not go to the meeting after he was released as he was suspicious about the purpose of the meeting.



Shane stopped offending after leaving the institution, and went on to have a successful career. However, when he became aware of Duncan's death, Shane became unable to function and became aggressive in his dealings with others. Ultimately he had to leave his job. Shane feels unable to trust certain sections of society and is unsure why that is.

Rose

Rose's account to the Inquiry was that she was brought up in a children's home from a young age, where the children had known for some time that the children's home provider was desperately looking for someone to take over.

Rose told us that the new manager, Walter, came from another of the provider's homes.

Rose can remember somebody saying "*he plays about with the children*", but she didn't understand what it meant.

A nurse, who had worked with Walter before, moved to the home with him. Rose describes her as lovely lady who was there when they got back from school and told the children to talk to her about any problems they had. One night, Walter put the girls to bed, which was alien to Rose as they had never been looked after by a male member of staff before, and she questioned why he would put them to bed when there were female members of staff available. Rose didn't like it and went to the nurse.

She also told the nurse about the first time Walter abused her; she was in the garden and Walter tried to kiss and touch her. The nurse went to check on the dormitory after bedtime, and caught Walter there with the girls. Rose thought that action would be taken but she found the nurse packing her bags and believes she had been sacked.

Rose recalls that Walter would invade the children's privacy by entering the bathrooms whilst they were in there.

Rose spoke to an adult at the home about the abuse, who said that, because Rose had no family, she didn't know what affection was and that was all Walter was showing.

Rose thought that there was no point speaking to her again as it would go no further. She believes she was one of the first children in the home to be abused, and thinks she was targeted as she had no family. Rose did not tell anyone in school as nothing had happened when she told the nurse and the other woman at the home. Rose felt she had nowhere else to go.

Rose told us that when an official visit was due, Walter took her aside and said that nobody would believe her, and if she told anyone he would stop her from going to visit the former matron. Rose decided not to say anything, as one of the best things in the home at that time was being able to go and see matron, who she had so much love for.

Walter moved Rose to another home out of the area, and told her to make a fresh start with new friends. Rose says she never mentioned the abuse but one of the members of staff told her "*we know that you are a trouble maker and we have been told not to listen to your lies*", so she thought there was no point in saying anything to anyone at the new home.

Rose says that three years after she left the home, Walter's abuse of other children was discovered when another family reported it to the police. Rose is unclear

whether the police took action but thinks that Walter was removed from the home. After this incident, someone from the home came to see Rose in her new home and she told them all about her abuse, but she is not aware that anything happened after this.

Rose explained that as an adult she met the children's home provider to talk about the abuse. They did apologise, but she thinks it was too little and too late.

They never acknowledged that there was a problem in the home that Walter moved from, and when Rose got her file from the provider, documents relating to the years when Walter was in the children's home were missing, with no explanation as to why.

Rose said she has made complaints to the police, but the police have not done anything. She feels that she needs 'closure' and the police investigating would provide that. Rose has tried to go to court several times for civil compensation and each time there has been some form of rule that has stopped her moving forward. Rose said she continues to fight to get justice through the courts for her and the other children in the home.



VICTIM AND SURVIVOR COMMENTS

We are immensely grateful to every victim and survivor who has so far felt able to share their experience with us.

We do not underestimate the courage that it takes for a victim and survivor to share an experience with the Inquiry, or the importance of feeling heard.

We value every piece of feedback or comment given by a victim and survivor who has taken the time to tell us how sharing an experience was to them. Taken from direct feedback and through the 'Have Your Say' feedback forms, this section shows some of the comments that we have received so far.



"I think that it is very impressive that the IICSA is engaging with the victims of abuse in such a personal way. For me, having the abuse that I experienced as a child recorded and acknowledged by such an important body is welcomed, highly valued and is in itself a symbolic if not practical form of closure. I am very keen for lessons to be learned from my unfortunate experiences as a child and welcome the opportunity to contribute in some small way to the formation of safer environments for our children in the future."

"Thank you VERY much for all your help and support during the Truth Project."

"I make contact to thank the team for the kindness and compassion shown to us both."

"The abuse took away the warmth of my childhood and left the cold."

"After 37 years of silence and self blame, I found the courage to tell. I commend the Truth Project to all victims as our opportunity to give our version of events through a process that is safe and dignified. Go for it!"

"Thank you for making the session comfortable. The thought and planning that has been put into this is self-evident and greatly helped me to present what I experienced as a child. All the staff, but particularly the facilitators and counsellor, did a great job."

"Participant was delighted with the professionalism of the whole process - he could not praise it enough." [from support worker]

"Thank you to support worker, Panel member and assistant facilitator for being so kind and making things as easy as they could be."

"Thank you so much for the way you treated us the day we came down."

"I was really impressed with how sensitively you dealt with me and the support that has been provided. I really admire what the Inquiry is hoping to achieve and am glad that I was given the opportunity to play a small part in this process."

"The Inquiry has got it right."

"Particular thanks to the Panel member for extreme kindness, sympathetic listening, understanding and confidence-inspiring words. Thank you."

"I just wanted to say thank you for your care and sensitivity to me during my interview with you and your staff yesterday. I would like to thank you for all the work you are doing for the protection of vulnerable children."

"Thanks to the Panel member, note taker and support worker, if the three of you are typical of the standards and sensitivity of the Truth Project I'm sure all those sharing their accounts of abuse will be happy with the experience."

"Thank you for the kindness and compassion shown."

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



VICTIM AND SURVIVOR SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

Many victims and survivors have told us what they would like to change and what they would like to see in the findings and recommendations of the Inquiry. We are listening to everything that is said and will consider all of these views, ideas and suggestions. A few are included here:



“I would like to see a restorative justice approach to be considered for institutions, for them to face up to and consider the harm that they have caused.”



“I think that there should be lifelong support for victims of child sexual abuse.”



“I believe that there should be opportunities for abuse victims to meet with people in authority within the institution to confront them about the way they handle abuse allegations.”



“I think that there should be a legal requirement on professionals to report abuse.”



“I would like to see a more compassionate and supportive court system for people with mental health problems.”



“I believe that training and education for professionals, parents and children is essential to combat child sexual abuse.”

“I believe that every child should know, just like they do maths and English, who to approach when they have been abused.”



“I would like to see prevention of abuse given a much higher priority than it appears to have now.”



“I believe that there needs to be more recognition of the interlinking abuse which can lead to child sexual abuse.”



“I would like the police to be required to provide more feedback/ clearer explanation as to why some matters aren’t taken further and why charges are dropped.”



“I think that we need to stop sweeping child abuse under the carpet and take away the stigma.”



“I would like to see apologies rather than litigation.”

