

Chaplaincy of All Saints' Marseille with Aix-en-Provence and the Luberon

Statement on publication of IICSA Report – 6th October 2020

You may well have heard in this week's news that on Tuesday, 6th October the report of The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse was published. This long-awaited and independent report follows a lengthy investigation into cases of child abuse within the Church of England (and Church in Wales). It makes for very uncomfortable reading – and certainly not just for us as members of the Church.

The Archbishops have published an open letter, which includes a link through to the full text of the Report: <https://mailchi.mp/churchofengland/offering-hope-as-we-face-a-second-wave-archbishops-letter-to-bishops-1033876?e=c55bdb73df>. The letter includes the statement:

“For survivors, this will remind them of the abuse they suffered and of our failure to respond well; it will be a very harrowing time for them. Some have shared courageously their story at the IICSA hearings or in other forums. For others this report will be a reminder of the abuse they have never talked openly about. We are truly sorry for the shameful way the Church has acted and we state our commitment to listen, to learn and to act in response to the report's findings. We cannot and will not make excuses and can again offer our sincere and heartfelt apologies to those who have been abused, and to their families, friends and colleagues.”

Of course, saying sorry is not enough. This is why the Church has put in place a comprehensive system of safeguarding. It's important to remember that this is not just a historic problem. Since the enquiry began, hundreds of new cases have been reported. We have a serious, ongoing duty of care to everyone who comes into contact with our chaplaincies and parishes – child or adult. Safeguarding systems aim to filter out and impede potential abusers – people who, unfortunately, tend to target organisations such as churches and other caring institutions. It is true that initial checks may not always spot wrongdoers, but safeguarding teams and church officers aim to ensure, by putting in place sensible policies, that opportunities for abuse around church activities are significantly reduced.

Please pray for all those deeply-affected by the IICSA report – and please, stand alongside those who are working hard to ensure that such matters never again cause harm to people in our care.

Christine Portman
Safeguarding Officer

7th October 2020