

Press Release

**The safeguarding complaint to the National Safeguarding Team ( NST) against Archbishop Welby**

The complaint brought in June 2020 against Archbishop Welby over his failings with regard to the disclosure to the Archbishop of abuse by John Smyth QC has been dismissed according to a press release issued this morning by the Church of England.

The Core Group has concluded that the failure to stop John Smyth by Archbishop Welby “raise no safeguarding concern for the Core Group”. There was therefore no investigation into Archbishop Welby and information provided by the Complainant was never examined and the Complainant was never formally interviewed. It has been repeated many times to the Complainant over the last five months that past behaviour is not addressed by the current safeguarding regime.

The statement this morning says that “information relating to the specific issues has been reviewed”. This is simply untrue. I repeat, I was never asked to run through the information I provided.

Secondly, the statement refers just to a complaint that the Archbishop “did not follow correct safeguarding procedure”. This is also untrue as the complaint was much wider than this. The facts have not been disputed. Archbishop Welby was, by his own admission, told about the abuse in 2013. There was no investigation and John Smyth was not stopped from continued abusive contact with young men in Cape Town and he remained in his role as Chairman of the Justice Alliance of South Africa until February 2017 when Channel 4 exposed the abuse.

It was further alleged that statements made by Archbishop Welby to the media regarding Smyth had been untrue and that this had been re-abusive of victims. The Complainant has been advised that the “further complaint sent to the NST in August, about wider issues, has now also been reviewed and no safeguarding concerns have been identified”. However, the Core Group has felt “there was some learning from the second part of the complaint, which relates to the impact that comments made in a public forum, including in media interviews, could have on victims and survivors of abuse”. It has not been made clear to the Complainant how Archbishop Welby will “learn” from this conclusion.

In October, while the complaint was outstanding, the Complainant was approached by David Porter, the Chief of Staff of Archbishop Welby, to address some of the information provided related to the complaint. This was a blatant attempt to pervert the course of justice and is now subject to a further complaint. It is known that this attempt to circumvent the formal complaint procedure was discussed and agreed with the Chair of the Welby Core Group, Deputy Director of the NST, Zena Marshall. The Complainant asked for her to be suspended from the Core Group, but this was refused by the Director of the NST. This matter is also now the matter of a formal complaint.

The Complainant has commented: “It has taken NST five months to tell me that there are no safeguarding concerns and that they will not even investigate the complaint. It has been the most shambolic and traumatic process that I could have imagined, devoid of transparency or justice. Archbishop Justin was told of Smyth’s abuse in 2013, but for four more years Smyth was not stopped: and the Archbishop’s failings are not even worthy of investigation”.

Graham

12 November 2020