
Publication Day Update – 12 July 2022

Statement from the Chair, Tom Crowther QC

This is the last progress update for the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation; today, the Report is published.

It has been three years since the Inquiry's Terms of Reference were agreed and work was able to begin. Producing this Report has taken longer than anyone expected, or that I hoped; the Inquiry has proved to be a very significant undertaking. Those Terms of Reference set out a period for investigation of more than 30 years; at the outset, I indicated that I would hear from witnesses, particularly victims and survivors, who could speak to CSE in Telford whenever it occurred – and I heard evidence of exploitation that took place as long ago as the 1970s.

The paperwork produced by public agencies is necessarily prolific. Key stakeholders have in this case disclosed almost 1.3 million pages of information to the Inquiry: the vast majority of that - 1,164,195 pages - from Telford & Wrekin Council. This took time: disclosure at that scale cannot be collated and transferred at a stroke; furthermore, I required key stakeholders to provide corporate submissions – essentially detailed statements – which ran to hundreds of pages. I recognise the effort taken in the compilation of those submissions. The work involved for key stakeholders was very significant and coincided with an unprecedented public health crisis during which they – the Council and West Mercia Police in particular – shouldered a huge burden of unforeseen responsibilities and challenges.

All the material received by the Inquiry had to be reviewed and assessed for relevance. That was a massive task in itself; but this Inquiry was not simply a paper exercise. In parallel with document review, the Commissioning Body and I saw – in various ways to account for Covid-19 - 170 witnesses, some more than once, including 37 victim/survivors and their family members or supporters.

The report, as published, is very lengthy. It is intended to be a comprehensive record of CSE and official response to it over the last 30 years, and contains detailed accounts of bureaucratic structures, committee meetings, legislation and policy; but at the heart of the report are the victim/survivor accounts, both from those witnesses who have given evidence and from the archive material disclosed by key stakeholders. They show the suffering of generations of children, and the failures of those who should have protected them. It has been my privilege to hear those accounts, and to give a voice to those children; and I pay tribute to the courage of those victims and survivors who have made this report possible.

Support Services

The Chair is aware that the contents of his Report may have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of a number of people who have contributed to the Inquiry, and others. Those people who are currently employed by statutory safeguarding services will be able to access their employer's confidential support services. For anyone else who may be affected by the contents of the Report, Telford & Wrekin Council has funded a confidential and independent support service from Base 25. This is the organisation that has been available to provide confidential support during the Inquiry's work. To access this independent support from Base 25, please use the code '**IITCSE2022**' and contact them as follows:

Call: 01902 572 040 or 07495 266 899
or **Text** 07495 266 899 or **Email** empower@base25.hush.com



Other independent support services are also available, including those detailed on the Inquiry's website here: <https://www.iitcse.com/confidential-support>

CONTACT THE INQUIRY

For all enquiries please contact:

IITCSE
c/o Eversheds Sutherland (International)
LLP
115 Colmore Row
Birmingham B3 3AL
Telephone: 0800 389 4322
mail@IITCSE.com