**Minutes of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Safeguarding in Faith Communities**

**Wednesday 22nd March, 2pm in Room CR14, Palace of Westminster**

**Present:**

**Officers**

Lord Bishop Viv Faull (Lords Spiritual - Co-Chair)

Ruth Jones MP (LAB - Co-Chair)

Janet Daby MP (LAB - Vice-Chair)

Stephen Timms MP (LAB - Vice-Chair)

Baroness Hollins (Cross-Bench Peer - Vice-Chair)

**Secretariat**

Justin Humphreys, Thirtyone:eight \*(Principal Advisor to the APPG)

Katy Jackson, Thirtyone:eight

Adam Graver, Thirtyone:eight

Leigh McFarlane, Thirtyone:eight (via Teams)

**Attendees**

Alan Collins, Hugh James solicitors

Shirley Maginley, NSPCC

Sharon Barr, United Reformed Church

Yannis Athanasiou, Church of England

Mark Bentley, The National Grid for Learning

William Kent, Porticus

Adam Tankard, Compassion UK

Becky Armstrong-Corbett, ex-JW Advocates Opposing Crimes Against Children

Duncan Corbett, ex-JW Advocates Opposing Crimes Against Children

Jane Chevous, Survivors Voices

John Viney, Individual

**Guest Presenters**

Dr. Bekah Eglinton, former Chief Psychologist to IICSA (Guest presenter)

Sabah Kaiser, former Ethnic Minority Ambassador to IICSAA (Guest Presenter)

Apologies

Tim Farron MP (LD - Vice-chair)

Baroness Sherlock (LAB Peer - Vice-chair)

Introduction

RJ opened the meeting, introducing herself, VF and JH, and then explained the format of the meeting.

Letter to Parliament re: IICSA

JH updated the APPG in relation to the letter. The letter is designed to communicate two key themes: 1.  to remind the government to commit to a full response to the IICSA, 2. To offer the APPG’s support to the government as they progress the recommendations. The letter was read and there will be opportunity for further discussion later.

A copy of the letter will be sent to attendees of the APPG meeting and they will have until 10th April to make comments. JH advised that the government have 6 months to consider the recommendations and respond (by 20th April), so the letter will need to be submitted in advance of this. RJ advised that we should expect a response within a reasonable timescale, if we do not receive a response, we can push the Government for this.

Presentation from Dr. Bekah Eglinton and Sabah Kaiser

Learning from Victims and Survivors

This presentation focused on 3 key areas .

1. How IICSA heard from victims and survivors and what we learned
2. How we reached out to voices less represented
3. IICSA’s recommendations to help better protect children in the future

The IICSA inquiry was victim and survivor led, with a Victim and Survivors’ Consultative Panel, a Victim and Survivors Forum, engagement with children and young people, engagement with ethnic minority communities and the Truth project all informing the inquiry’s work. The Truth Project heard from 6339 survivors, of whom 10% represented diverse and minority groups.

Key themes arising from the inquiry include institutions failures to protect children. Often the organisations reputation were prioritised above the child. Religious contexts were highlighted – children and young people were not believed, conduct of perpetrators was not highlighted, there are lifelong impacts of the abuse and inadequate support systems in place. The spiritual impact of abuse was also significant.

10% of participants were from ethnic minority communities. The intersectionality of barriers which stopped these communities speaking out were significant. The inquiry focused on ensuring that these voices were represented.

Some of the IICSA recommendations that may be of interest to the APPG:

* Setting up two single Child Protection Authorities (one for England and one for Wales)
* Greater use of the barred list
* Improving compliance to notify DBS
* Mandatory reporting

Discussion

Examples of barriers for communities in England?

Two key barriers: institutional failures as ethnic minority communities are treated as communities who deal with sexual abuse themselves and racism and stereotypes which leads to trust issues. A study which focuses on six key barriers will be passed on by the presenters to be sent out to the APPG.

Was there much engagement with individuals with learning disabilities as there is a preference of sexual abuse affecting this demographic?

that this was tricky due to general safeguarding concerns, however some family members came forward on behalf of their family member who has a learning disability.

Is any estimate on how much sexual abuse is costing in terms of impact and failures by institutions as the figures from the presentation show lifelong issues for survivors?

This is a powerful question and it is hard to put a monetary amount on this. It was stated that the price was too high. It was advised that NSPCC had completed a cost analysis in relation to this question, this is available at [Economic cost of child maltreatment in the UK | NSPCC Learning](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2017/economic-cost-child-maltreatment) There is also a piece of research called ‘Survivors Transition’ which considers this question, this will also be sent to the APPG. This question has also been raised by a survivor to their MP. WK also commented that work had been done on costs to society and that information could be circulated to the secretariat following the meeting.

An attendee highlighted that the golden thread of the recommendations from the IICSA report is lack of accountability. It is important that the government take accountability as without this the recommendations aren't upheld. This all links to ethos and culture.

An attendee highlighted what survivors' that her organisation worked with valued in relation to this discussion and the letter to ministers RE Government respond to IICSA. They stated that for survivors', the public campaign about sexual abuse is more important than mandatory reporting. Mandatory reporting should be happening anyway and the recommendations from the report should be a minimum of what we expect. Support for survivors' is important as currently there are no pathways in terms of mental health, barriers in accessing budgets and therapy for example. It is also important to push for accountability and for the Child Protection Authority (recommended by the IICSA report) to have power to hold institutions accountability for actions.

An attendee stated that in terms of the letter as someone who works with survivors', it would be good to have time to feedback to get active engagement to ensure survivor voice. Where do people go to following on from the Truth Project now the enquiry has been published? It was advised that the NSPCC have set up an IICSA Changemakers Group.

An attendee stated that stated that mandatory reporting is important in hindering abuse in the church. It is important that we thoroughly record and report in relation to this too.

AOB

There was no other business, so the meeting was concluded.