

Investigating historical sexual abuse

- > **Lowell Goddard inquiry:** Independent inquiry investigating how public services managed allegations of child sexual abuse
- > **Operation Hydrant / Fairbank:** Over-arching police investigation into allegations of non-recent abuse of vulnerable children
 - Central co-ordination of 666 current investigations into abuse in institutions and 261 investigations into sexual abuse by persons of public prominence
 - Work feeds into Lowell Goddard inquiry
 - **IPCC investigation and Wanless review:** Investigation of allegations of cover-up of abuse allegations by police and Home Office
 - Wanless Review found no evidence of documents being deliberately lost or destroyed
 - The IPCC investigation is on-going

IICSA Lowell Goddard inquiry: Overview

- › **Scope** of 'unprecedented depth and breadth':
 - The extent to which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation
 - The extent to which those failings have been addressed
 - Further action needed and steps State and non-State institutions should take to keep children safe
 - Evidence from as far back in time as required
 - Includes hearing evidence from adults who were abused as children
- › **Timescale:** Public sessions to begin in 2016, 'sincere hope and expectation' to end by 2020
- › **Conclusions:** Findings of fact against named people but no criminal prosecutions or civil liability
- › **Budget:** £17.9m for 2015/16 to set up infrastructure and operational costs, including victim support

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Investigation process

- **Workstreams** (simultaneous): People in prominence; education and religion; criminal justice and law enforcement; LAs and voluntary organisations; national and private service organisations
- **Investigations:** 25 (approx) thematic and institution-specific investigations. 5 per workstream
- Investigations selected where:
 - Credible allegations of sexual abuse in an institutional setting or by a person exploiting an official position
 - Institution appears to have facilitated or failed to prevent the abuse
 - Institution or person in official capacity failed to respond appropriately to allegations
 - Typical of a pattern of abuse occurring in the sector
 - Practical ability to investigate
 - No significant risk to current police investigations or prosecutions
 - Likely to result in relevant conclusions or recommendations

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Role of local authorities

Specific investigations:

- › Sexual abuse of Children in Care in Lambeth and Nottinghamshire, the authorities' failings and the appropriateness of responses to allegations
- › Sexual abuse taking place in children's homes in Rochdale and in homes where children from Rochdale were placed
- › Investigation into nature, extent and institutional responses to child sexual exploitation by organised networks

All local authorities may be required to supply documents and evidence

Retention notices have been issued in relation to:

- › Individuals or organisations involved in abuse
- › Allegations of abuse, whether or not substantiated
- › Institutional failings to respond to abuse
- › Material relating to statutory duties, policy and legislation
- › Material relating to the determination of honours

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Role of local authorities cont...

'I urge you to take a proactive stance towards the Inquiry – to review your files, records and procedures voluntarily and to take the initiative to self-report instances of institutional failure – rather than waiting for us to come and see you'.

Above all, review your current safeguarding policies to make sure that they are consistent with best practice, and take whatever steps you can to provide a safer environment for children now.'

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, Opening Statement, 9 July 2015

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Listening to victims

- › No findings of fact / legal consequences based solely on victim testimony
- › Everyone who wants to bear witness to abuse will be invited to do so though not all cases will be forensically investigated
- › Victims and survivors will be supported throughout the process by sexual violence advocates, specialist counselling where required and communication support for those who need it
- › Victims and survivors to be interviewed in private. Information will be recorded, anonymised and aggregated to feed into inquiry
- › All allegations of child abuse will be passed to the police. Victims can choose whether to pursue this
- › Victims can, but do not have to, contribute to public hearings. For those who do not, the summary of their evidence will be used

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Public hearings

- › Investigations in two parts: First investigation into institution or setting followed by investigation of wider context and lessons for the sector
- › Institutions will need to provide documentary evidence in advance, answer questions and nominate individual representatives as witnesses
- › Call for evidence to anyone with relevant evidence to give in relation to wider context and lessons to be learned
- › Witnesses can be compelled to provide evidence (not victims)
- › Core participants:
 - Can suggest lines of enquiry and give closing statements and final written submissions
 - Entitled to appoint lawyers and may be eligible for assistance with legal costs
 - Warning letters will be sent if participants are liable to be criticised
- › Protection for whistleblowers from prosecution under *Official Secrets Act* and unlawful possession of evidence
- › Reports published soon after the end of each investigation

Sector responses

- › There has been little communication between the inquiry and the sector bodies or individual local authorities, apart from the retention letter
- › To date, there has been little formal public response from sector bodies to the inquiry's formation or terms of reference

Some questions and concerns for the sector:

- › **Costs:** Searching records, managing responses to investigations and securing legal advice will all have cost implications. The extent of cost and demands on staff time are so far unclear
- › **Communication:** How will local authorities keep up-to-date with what is happening, their contributions to the enquiry and how they can get involved?
- › **Continuity:** Will previous reviews and investigations run locally in response to abuse allegations be used as evidence?
- › **Capacity:** What is the expectation on LAs in supporting victims (past and present)? Do we expect increased demand for services?
- › **Other questions?**