

PRESS RELEASE

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CHURCH SERIOUSLY MISHANDLED' HALLIDAY ABUSE CASE, SAYS CCPAS

'Complete red herring' to claim law was different back then

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), one of the UK's leading experts in advising and training Christian and secular organisations in child protection practices, today said that the church leaders "seriously mishandled" the case of Peter Halliday when church authorities first became aware of his abusive behaviour in 1990.

David Pearson, Chief Executive of CCPAS, commented: "Today it has been stated that the law was different back then. This is, I am afraid to say, a complete red herring.

"Although the Children Act 1989 was not implemented until 1991 and most denominations did not establish child protection procedures until some time later, it was well known even then that serious crimes against children had to be reported to the police. The Church had a clear responsibility to take effective action to ensure that a known risk was prevented from having any further contact with children whatsoever.

"Sadly, the fact is that those in charge at the time failed to act appropriately and take professional advice was readily available. CCPAS' child protection Help Line was established in the late 1980's; had we been contacted by the church authorities then we would have had no hesitation in telling them to go straight to the police. Of course, there was also nothing to stop them from taking advice from police or social services at the time.

It is also misleading to suggest that there was only one opportunity to act in this case. The introduction a few years later of the Church of England's child protection policy and their training programme should have highlighted to those concerned the inappropriateness of actions previously taken and this should have resulted in a different response.

“CCPAS was shocked to hear of this case and the damage that was done to these children. It now appears that a number of others were subsequently placed at risk from a man who was known to have offended against children.

“In our view this situation was seriously mishandled by the Church and the victims will best be helped now by those responsible making a full acknowledgement of these failings”.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

CCPAS is an independent Christian charity providing professional child protection advice and support across church denominations and organisations throughout the UK.

CCPAS was established in 1977. It assists churches, organisations, social services and other child care agencies as well as individual children and families by:

- helping churches and other organisations adopt safe practice in order to protect children from abuse – and youth workers from the possibility of false allegations
- advising on individual cases, giving ongoing help to leaders and others.
- training across the UK and providing “in-house” training and other resources
- acting as external consultants to denominational/organisational child protection advisors
- counselling individual adults or children about past or present abuse.

For more information, please see www.ccpas.co.uk