

PRESS RELEASE

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SIX KEY QUESTIONS CHURCH OF ENGLAND MUST ANSWER OVER RECENT ABUSE CONVICTIONS, SAYS CCPAS

“Independent Review needed to prevent further repetitions”

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 cases of Peter Halliday and Rev David Smith raises fundamental questions about how church leaders could continue to have a role with children – despite serious concerns having been previously flagged up in both cases.

CCPAS therefore calls on the Church of England to provide answers to the following six key questions:

1. Was the diocese of Bath & Wells aware of earlier concerns when it appointed the Rev Smith?
2. If not, why not? How robust are the Church's appointment checks and procedures?
3. The 'safeguards' put in place in 2001 appear to suggest the diocese believed there to be some substance to the allegations. Given this, why did he remain in post?
4. Why did the Church, given the knowledge of the manipulative nature of sex offending behaviour, so readily and so naively believe a promise made by a suspected abuser not to be alone with children?
5. Will the Church of England commission an independent review in order that the church and others employing workers with children might learn the lessons from this case?

6. Will the Church of England take a leaf out of the Catholic Church's book and now insist on a review of known historic cases with a view to reporting to the statutory authorities where appropriate?

David Pearson, Chief Executive of CCPAS, stressed: "We are aware of the work of both dioceses involved in the Smith case, and have a high regard generally for their commitment to safeguarding children. We are also pleased the Bishop has apologised and recognised the impact this has had on the victims.

"However, there are clearly a number of serious issues that must be addressed and we hope that our call for an independent review will be heeded by the church authorities"

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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