

## **PRESS RELEASE**

30 April 2007

### **OPEN LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

The Most Reverend,  
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury  
Lambeth Palace  
London SE1 7JU

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Your Grace

I was very pleased to see your timely statement expressing your deep sorrow for the suffering of victims of child abuse involving the Church of England. As a result of earlier statements issued by the church, CCPAS was besieged with media enquiries seeking our comments on the Halliday case last week.

We are aware of the hard work of so many within the Church of England to safeguard children. We know this first hand as my wife and I have probably trained far more Anglican clergy over the last decade than anyone else. The Church of England has also used some policies and good practice pioneered by CCPAS in developing its own guidelines.

Unfortunately it has been necessary for us to challenge some of the statements made by the Church of England last week, which suggested that things were somehow 'very different' in 1990 when these particular concerns first came to light. Various spokespersons for the Church of England referred to the government guidance 'Safe from Harm' issued in 1993. This was about the safe recruitment of workers and did not directly address the issue of reporting crimes against children. However, I accept that clergy were not sufficiently aware of their responsibilities at the time.

As a child in the 1950s I was sexually abused by a youth leader. On discovering the situation, local leaders immediately reported the matter to the police. I have been involved in child protection issues as a social worker and social work manager over a 40 year period. The expectation regarding reporting serious crimes has never been any different although, as we know, until denominations and others issued proper child protection guidance many churches failed in their responsibilities to act appropriately in such cases. Having looked at numerous historic cases over time, it is quite clear to me that the dominating factor has been the desire to protect the interests of the church; the needs of children have not properly or adequately been addressed.

It is very unfortunate that, despite the introduction of such policies and training in the 1990s, those who have been involved in failing to report such matters were not able to reflect on past decisions and discuss such matters with the statutory authorities. However, it is never too late to act in these sorts of cases and I trust that as Primate you will now do all within your power to persuade diocesan authorities to address this issue, specifically re-opening old files, re-examining any historic instances where cases of abuse have possibly been hushed up - and reporting such matters to the police as soon as practicable.

This is the only way to obtain justice for those who have been abused and to help them come to terms with what happened to them.

It will also send a clear signal to any others tempted to abuse children within a Church of England setting that senior Anglican clergy will not tolerate such behaviour - and will ensure that all allegations of abuse, no matter how long ago they took place, will be properly and fully investigated.

Yours faithfully

David Pearson  
Chief Executive  
Churches Child Protection Advisory Service

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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](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)