

Agenda Item: 6.

One Nottingham Board

Title of Paper: Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)
Date: 14th July 2017

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper updates the Board on the recent workshop on the IICSA

2. Recommendations

2.1 The One Nottingham Board is asked to:
 Note the report and to distribute the details to their networks and partners as appropriate.

3. Background

3.1 At the recent ON Board and One Nottingham Chief Officers Group it was agreed to hold a briefing meeting on the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. This workshop took place and a note of that meeting is attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 Also attached to this paper is an electronic version of the leaflet including details of the IICSA review. Paper copies of this are available, and details of who to contact for further information are on the leaflet.

4. Contact Details

Nigel Cooke – Director of One Nottingham
 ☎ 0115 876 4997
 ✉ nigel.cooke@onenottingham.org.uk

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

Partnership Briefing

16th May 2017, Loxley House

Background to the Inquiry

An increasing number of reports of child sexual abuse have been made in a number of institutions, including the BBC, NHS, Children's Homes and Schools. The allegations of sexual offending involving children have been made against people with prominent positions in public. There are growing reports of failure within the police to investigate allegations of child sexual abuse and failures to prosecute these allegations. The Inquiry provides a comprehensive and joined up response to these issues.

Overview

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse was established as a statutory inquiry on 12 March 2015 to consider the growing evidence of institutional failures to protect children from child sexual abuse, and to make recommendations to ensure the best possible protection for children in the future. The Inquiry is covering England and Wales and is independent of government, which is led by Alexis Jay, and will hope to produce a report by 2020 with potential to go beyond this.

The focus of the Inquiry will be on institutional failures and the experiences of victims and survivors, with them being central to the work of the Inquiry. It will be focusing on an important message to encourage people who are coming forward to report it.

The Purpose of the Inquiry

To consider the extent to which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. To also consider the extent to which those failings have since been addressed and to identify further action needed to address any failings identified. The Inquiry will furthermore consider the steps which it is necessary for State and non-State institutions to take in order to protect children from such abuse in the future. A report will then be published along with recommendations.

IICSA – How will the Inquiry work?

There are difficulties with navigating the system, in order to overcome there will be services put in place to help victims and survivors to get the support that they need.

The Inquiry will be guided by three principles: it will be comprehensive, inclusive and thorough. The Inquiry will be divided into three core Projects:

- The Research Project will bring together, for the first time, an analysis of all published work addressing institutional failures in child protection and will look at the context of the period and to attempt to ensure that it is appropriate.

- The Truth Project will allow victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to share their experiences with the Inquiry

It has been advised that the stakeholder event and truth counselling event will take place in July in Nottingham.

The Public Hearing Project will resemble a conventional public inquiry where witnesses give evidence on oath and are subject to cross examination. The Inquiry will select case studies from a range of institutions that appear to illustrate a pattern of institutional failings, with each hearing lasting for around six weeks.

Evidence is likely to be taken from both representatives of the institutions under investigation and from victims and survivors of sexual abuse. The Inquiry does not have the power to convict abusers of criminal offences or to award compensation to victims and survivors.

The Inquiry has launched thirteen investigations into a broad range of institutions identified on the basis of the Panel's criteria for selection of investigations:

- Accountability and Reparations
- Cambridge House, Knowl View and Rochdale
- Children in Custodial Institutions
- Children Outside the UK (including Child Migration Programmes case study)
- Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks
- Lambeth Council
- Lord Janner
- Nottinghamshire Councils
- Residential Schools
- The Anglican Church
- The Internet
- The Roman Catholic Church
- Westminster

In November 2015 Justice Goddard (the then chair of the Inquiry) announced that the independent investigation into child sexual exploitation will look into the failure to protect children in the care of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Councils. A significant number of allegations of historical abuse in children's homes, previously operated by Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City councils and other organisations, have been made, dating back to the 1940s. The allegations relate to a range of abuse including physical and sexual abuse. In relation to this the City Council and PCC have put additional support into counselling and rape crisis.

Currently, there are a significant number of actions, both criminal and civil, that are under way:

- (1) Operation Equinox which is the overarching umbrella for a variety of operations, including:
 - Operation Daybreak, which was launched by Nottinghamshire Police in 2011
 - Operation Xeres, investigating similar allegations in north Nottinghamshire, was launched in 2015

- (2) Civil Claims against both the County and City Councils.

Progress to Date

The IICSA has been requesting a variety of information from both Councils since January 2016. Four Information Requests have been received to date requesting information around current and historical policies, procedures, guidance, investigation reports, civil claims, allegations against staff and foster carers. Both City and County DCS's met with the Inquiry in February 2016 and May 2017 to further define the scope. There is still not a clear indication of scope of timelines.

The Core Participant Applications are:

- Victims/Survivors

- Nottingham City Council/Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottinghamshire Police

- Preliminary Hearing (11th May)

Next Steps

We will continue to actively support the Police investigations, as well as the civil claim processes in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the care of the City is and always will be the highest priority. The primary purpose is that victims are supported and perpetrators are identified and whenever possible, brought to justice. There will be continued information sharing and updates for Councillors, colleagues and citizens. There will also be support for colleagues and Councillors.

For more information please see the websites below.

IICSA website <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/>

NCC website <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/children-and-families/child-abuse-prevention/allegations-of-historical-child-abuse-in-nottinghamshire/>