

Petitioner submission of 12 November 2022

PE1905/F: Public Inquiry into the response of religious organisations to allegations of child sexual abuse since 1950

The link provided below has 12 presentations from the Department of Education at Westminster, teachers, Health Care Professionals and more.

I realise that with all of this research via IICSA that has went into Mandatory Reporting as one of the recommendations, has taken a lot of time, nearly £200 million, from research, to panels, to findings, to many different services, countries and agencies all having a say on what they believe should be done for the protection and safeguarding of children in the future, and in cases like mine where the organisation is insular in nature, not conversing with the outside world - the hidden child in plain sight.

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/research-seminars/mandatory-reporting-child-sexual-abuse>

This leads me to the podcast that the telegraph conducted entitled "Call Bethel" where the reporters investigated my former religious organisation and came to one conclusion - that they (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society/Jehovah's Witnesses/JW. Org) do not want to speak to the outside world unless it fits with their agenda.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/call-bethel-inside-story-telegraphs-investigative-podcast-child/>

Professor Alexis Jay recently visited Holyrood.

<https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view,alexis-jay-ive-been-shocked-in-my-career-but-some-of-this-horrified-me>

I fully understand that my former religious organisation is not the only group to have silenced those who have been abused in the past and lessons must be learned from this. However, lessons will not be learned by JW institutions if they are unwilling to engage with anyone outside of their bubble. I am sure as politicians, recently having went through the

independence campaign, you all have come across people who are unwilling to talk, listen to the ideas you've put forward, for and against because they shut themselves off and become cognitively dissonant.

This is what I am afraid is happening in our government, that politicians are shutting themselves off from this issue, because it is scary, it chills to the bone what we went through making you all very uncomfortable and I get that. But 'Change must come.' I speak on behalf of my own inner child and the children of the future born into isolationist camps/organisations where abuse is reported to the leaders of such organisations and authorities not told. They need to be forced by the government to do so. John Swinney highlighted in his report that there was not enough evidence to show that Mandatory Reporting worked and to ask the religious organisation that I was part of to work with the charity "Stop it Now" - I can categorically say right now that Jehovah's Witnesses will not work with such charities or organisations that are not part of their own organisation. The link provided from their own resource, explains this.

<https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101997649>

Even if there is no inquiry in Scotland and the government takes the recommendations on board as our neighbours down south are doing, this will be a massive win for us, because it is for the children, for their voices to be heard and for the adult in the room to state that it was a harrowing experience for that child and steps will be put in place to ensure the right thing is done by the child, to no longer allow such abuse to continue. Abuse happens unfortunately, but if the right people are told, the abuse stops and reparations can be put in place for that child such as play therapy, psychological therapy. It is my firm belief that child sexual abuse will continue for children currently being silenced within insular isolationist organisations, religious or otherwise if the steps of Mandatory Reporting and accountability are not put in place. I stress again, that the leaders of such organisations need their hands forced by the government to report to the proper governing authorities as they are mandated by their governing body to turn a blind eye to it, effectively silencing child victims of CSA.

[Child abuse inquiry makes key recommendations](#)

Finally, I do not want Jehovah's Witnesses to be harmed in this process because it is for their children and children like them that I have sought the help in this matter. I do not hate them. I do not want them banned as

they are entitled to the non harmful beliefs they hold dear to their hearts. It is the harmful beliefs and policies perpetrated on their membership which I am taking issue with as it harms children and many of these policies are not even known to the regular member as it is secretive. Unless they have been abused or in close direct contact to the issue, they are led down the path where the organisation tells its membership one thing and does the complete opposite. This in my view is why Mandatory Reporting is so important. If the elders of each congregation are mandated reporters, then when an allegation of abuse comes to them from the victim of that abuse, they will have a written protocol to follow, somewhere along the lines of contacting the police whilst the family are still in the Kingdom Hall and to inform the police to detain the abuser whilst they do their investigation. In this way, the child and family will be supported by their elders. Training should be put forward for those who are in that position or for those who are being considered for that position and a PVG check done to ensure they have not committed any crimes.

Thanks for listening.