

Safeguarding Newsletter 2

www.boarding.org.uk

Welcome to the second safeguarding newsletter. It has been a busy week for safeguarding and child protection news.

Key highlights:

An article in *The Times* last week reported a 131% increase in the number of children being reported for texting naked and indecent images, with the figure now standing at 6,000 a year. **Chief Constable Simon Bailey, Police Chiefs' Lead on Child Protection**, who was keynote speaker at the BSA Safeguarding Conference, stressed that the current police strategy was not to criminalise children, despite sexting being a criminal offence. Instead their names were held on a register, He also indicated that children abusing other children now accounted for one in five cases of child sexual exploitation.

CC Bailey also expressed concern about the scale of online porn being accessed by children. The full article can be accessed via www.thetimes.co.uk/article/web-porn-drives-children-to-abuse-one-another-00fft27x although there may be subscription requirements to access the full article.

Shortly afterwards *The Daily Telegraph* reported the case of a 14 year old who had sent a naked selfie to a girl and subsequently been added to the log by Greater Manchester Police. He has been granted leave to seek a judicial review of the procedure, and for his name to be deleted from the record. Speaking on Radio 4's *Today* programme, his mother stressed the importance of this, as the information could appear at any point throughout his life on an enhanced DBS and affect his chances of employment.

INEQE GROUP has recently published a factsheet on Sextortion which can be accessed from their website, www.ineqe.com/ineqe_documents/Sextortion.pdf

Jim Gamble, CEO of Ineqe, and former head of CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection), is also speaking at our conference today.

Kristine Scott, of Harrison Clark Rickerbys has recently updated our guidance on Transgender issues. There are only a few tweaks from the existing document, and the updated version will be distributed with the full BSA newsletter in coming weeks. Kristine shared a platform with **David Smellie of Farrers** at the Conference. For the benefit of those in Scotland and Wales, I am in the process of checking that the legal aspect of the guidance applies equally for you.

Overleaf is a very brief resumé of the findings of the recent Truth Project report from IICSA (Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) in England, and details of some of the testimonies published earlier. The Scottish Inquiry has published a similar report, which I shall analyse in the next newsletter. The IICSA timetable for 2018 was published last week, and there is no indication of the boarding school strand being a focus in the next twelve months, although some schools will be called through other means.

Dale Wilkins
Head of Safeguarding and Standards, BSA

The truth project report

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The Truth Project enables victims and survivors to share their experiences with a member of the Inquiry (IICSA) in a safe environment.

A recent report evaluates testimonies from abuse victims, and can be found at:

www.iicsa.org.uk/document/victim-and-survivor-voices-truth-project

COMMON THEMES ARE:

- Not being believed at the time
- The organisation in question colluding in covering up the abuse
- Victims were accused of making things up
- There was a reluctance to believe children and thereby “ruin careers”
- A lack of compassion when the abuse was eventually disclosed historically.

53% of participants in the testimonies were male, with 47% female. Ages ranged from 23 to 80, with an average of 54.

22% of those who had been abused in institutions had been abused by education staff, 9% by care staff and 9% by peers, with some having multiple abusers. 28% were abused in schools (which includes all schools, not just boarding schools). Other care institutions, churches and voluntary organisations made up the rest. 35% had disclosed the abuse at the time, with a quarter disclosing to parents. Shockingly, only 14% of those disclosing abuse report that they were believed. As well as having an impact on relationships, physical health and many other aspects of their lives, 82% reported a negative impact on their mental health over many years. Many had received unsatisfactory responses from schools when the abuse had eventually come to light. One said: “The immediate response of a schoolis to contact lawyers, where institutions, especially boarding schools, are supposed to be acting as parents not as legal entities, and to immediately go to the legal perspective it’s mediated through lawyers. ‘We can’t apologise, because apologising would admit culpability’, which means that it’s not a human process. **That, to me, is as much a failure not of the school but the institution of boarding schools.**”

a summary

The report runs to 154 pages, and I cannot do justice to it with those brief few comments, but it gives the sector, and individual schools, much to ponder I feel.

Some of the testimonies were summarised in a document published in December 2016, www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/923/view/truth-project-experiences-shared.pdf

This document is also extremely long, but the testimonies deserve a closer read. Some relate directly to boarding school, including “**Jack**”, who was subject to a sophisticated grooming process by a teacher in a school he describes as having a “highly sexualised environment”. **Patrick** was abused at a residential school by another pupil. The abuse left him so traumatised that he was unable to consider having children of his own. One of the hardest elements for him was the way the school was “hostile and dismissive” of his claims

when he eventually made them, although he did win compensation following a tribunal at the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

Dean was physically and sexually abused as a boarder at a choir school. He finds it difficult to hug and cuddle his own children as a result of the abuse he suffered. **Ethan** was abused by both prefects (he was “passed round”) and by staff. **Derek** wrote to the school about abuse he had suffered, and found the school’s response unsatisfactory. He only wanted an apology, but once the insurance company got involved he stopped pursuing it.

There are other testimonies in the document, many from girls, relating to other settings, but these are the most pertinent to us as boarding schools.