

# Principles, Priorities, and Processes

## The National Redress Scheme Survivor and Victim Working Group

This paper has been put together by the Working Group of survivors and victims of church related abuse to communicate our hopes for the Redress Scheme. We have tried to include and represent the voices of other victims and survivors that we have had contact with through the support work and survivor organisations we are connected to.

Redress means to remedy or set right. It is restorative, attending to the impact and needs of the survivor, and whilst including financial compensation, it is much more than this. In a Christian setting, such as the Church of England, it is attached to the values of shalom, and aims at the restoration of the person harmed. We aspire to see cultural change, a safer church, and recovery for victims, so they and their families can rebuild their lives.

The survivor and victim working group are working with the Church of England to develop the Redress Scheme. We hope our principles and priorities will be met in the design and outworking of the Redress Scheme.

### Principles

During the first meeting of the Working Group on 1 October 2021 we discussed words to describe what we desired and hoped the Redress Scheme would be. Having worked together as a group over the year we believe these principles are foundational to the development of the Scheme. A more detailed description of each of these principles can be found on page 3 to 6.

#### We believe the Redress Scheme should be

**Survivor-centred**

**Co-produced**

**Practical**

**& workable**

**Timely**

**Trustworthy**

**& transparent**

**Non litigious**

**Fair & just**

**Responsive**

**Visible**

**Accessible**

**Inclusive**

**Generous**

**Compassionate  
& caring**

**Holistic**

**Supportive  
& sensitive**

**More than  
just money**

**Delivers justice**

**Helping to  
rebuild lives**

**Acknowledging &  
recognising abuse**

**Lifegiving**

**Transformative  
& impactful**

**Restorative**

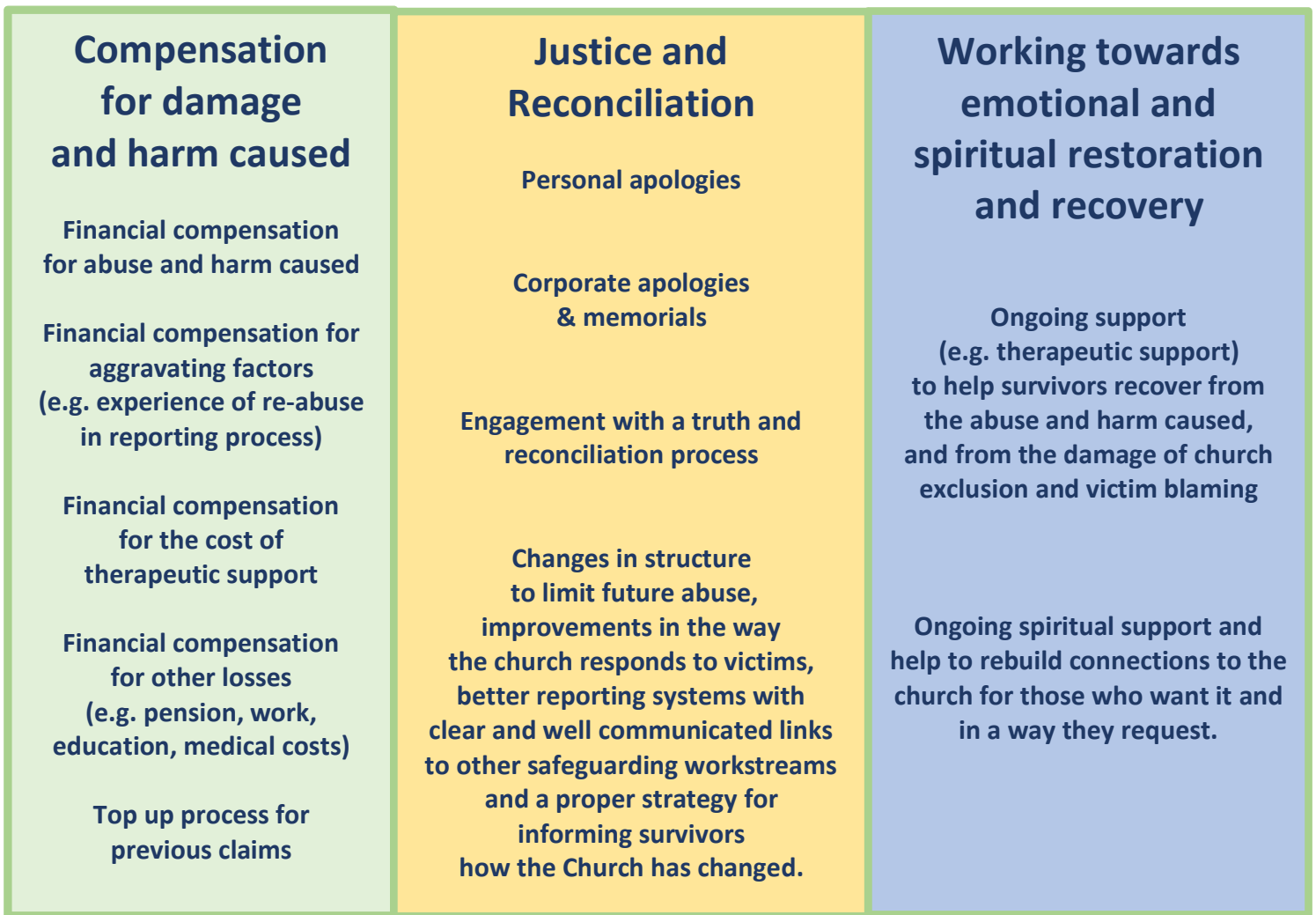
**Provides hope**

## Priorities

Our hopes for the Scheme can be divided into three priorities which are listed below. Survivors report that they are struggling and experience little or no support from the Church in this. We believe all three aspects are necessary for a workable survivor-centred scheme.

We acknowledge that victims and survivors of abuse in the Church of England have had different experiences, have different needs, and different hopes for redress. In outlining these three areas of priority, we are not stating that all survivors hold all three as their priority, (and some may have other priorities), but that across the breadth of survivors all three priorities have been repeatedly called for. All three aspects are foundational for any scheme which hopes to bring redress.

The Scheme will become a public and visible sign of engagement with victims and survivors. We believe a siloed approach, which does not attend to all three priorities, will not communicate well. We believe it is important that the Scheme is comprehensive if it is to be survivor centred.



## Processes

Progress has been made since the start of the project, particularly under the first priority: compensation for damage and harm caused. We are pleased to see these developments happening. We are keen the scheme is set up well and appreciate all this involves. We are also concerned about the amount of time this is taking and the impact that has on survivors. We have stressed that interim support should continue to be available for survivors until the Scheme is up and running.

We will continue to express our principles and priorities and encourage the Project Board to incorporate these throughout the design stage and into the implementation stages of the Scheme. We are continuing to meet regularly as a Working Group, and with representation on the Project Board, to be a voice for survivors and to challenge the Church to set up a fair and workable Scheme.

## Definitions

**Survivor-Centred** Focusing on the care, needs, risks, and wishes of each individual survivor ensuring that their preferences, needs, beliefs, and values guide the Scheme's engagement with them. Providing a service that is flexible, empathetic, respectful, and responsive to survivors. This should be achieved by developing the Scheme which is co-produced with survivors.

**Co-produced** The Scheme should include work with survivors' to gain their views in design and implementation and develop plans in a collaborative way. The needs and rights of survivors should be foundational to any plans developed, and both the content of the Scheme and the communication and language of the Scheme should be developed with survivor input.

**Practical and workable** Any scheme must be workable and robust. Lessons learnt from other schemes are informative here, as is expertise and input from survivors. The need for a workable scheme is held in tension with the principles and the need to remain survivor centred. Quality assurance principles need to be included in the plans.

**Timely** Aiming to produce a workable and resourced scheme, in keeping with its core values, within the planned timeframe. It is in survivors' interests that the Scheme is up and running soon. However, the desire for a timely outcome does not override the other principles. A timely scheme is also a scheme which processes applications quickly, communicates well and does not leave survivors waiting unsure of when outcomes will happen.

**Trustworthy and transparent** Trust can be earned through survivors' experiences of a good and well-run scheme. The Church should not expect or assume survivors' trust simply because a scheme has been set up. A survivor-centred well-run scheme, which is accessible and generous, and shows how it attends to fairness and justice in a transparent manner, offers the Church the opportunity to show victims the extent to which it can be trusted. Applying to the Scheme should be a clear and straightforward process. It should be transparent about what it offers, so as not to raise unrealistic expectations.

**Non litigious** Having a peaceable, personable, and amiable approach, with processes which empower rather than fight survivors. Survivors have reported their experiences of the church as combative and cite this as an experience of re-abuse. The Scheme should not repeat this.

**Fair and just** Whilst no scheme could make full redress for the damage caused, the Scheme can show, through its transparent design and implementation, that it acts fairly, and treats all victims and survivors who apply with respect, consistency and equity.

**Responsive** Takes a flexible approach to respond to the types of redress the survivor has requested.

**Visible** Clear, proactive, wide-reaching communication strategy, including a media campaign, to ensure the Scheme is as visible as possible, to reach as many victims and survivors as possible. Communication with all those in the church's files to aim to be visible to as many victims and survivors as possible, and work with other support organisations to ensure the Scheme is highly visible.

**Accessible** Good communication with clear and easy to understand language, with clear processes which encourage survivors to respond and apply to the scheme. Careful language which does not exclude or deter victims from responding or applying, with support for those who will struggle to access the Scheme. All materials need to be accessible and encouraging. Collaboration with survivors is important to ensure appropriate communication.

**Inclusive** All applications should be considered on an equal basis. This includes those who were children and those who were adults when the abuse occurred, those applying from the UK and those overseas. The Scheme should do all it can to ensure all victims of abuse can apply and offer additional support to individuals who may need it. Consideration needs to be given to how children might apply, and how the Scheme might support disabled people, rough sleepers and other vulnerable people in applying. The Scheme should not exclude victims considered to be vexatious. Any person is allowed to make a claim which will be fairly considered. An equality policy for the Scheme would help ensure this.

**Generous** Morally generous in approach, in language and tone, as experienced by those applying to the Scheme. Financially generous in comparison to other schemes, but the value of generosity, kindness, and respect is to be experienced through all contact with the Scheme.

**Compassionate and caring** The Scheme should be set up in a way that is compassionate and caring, seeking to support survivors and treat them with care and patience. This includes finance for therapeutic support throughout and beyond the Scheme and careful attention to their requests. Where the survivors want apologies and/or support with church engagement, this should be facilitated. Likewise, if a survivor wants a completely secular response from the Scheme this should be facilitated, and in all cases the Scheme should aim to treat survivors in a personal and caring way.

**Holistic** The Scheme should be attentive to the requests of survivors and take a person-centred approach. For some this may simply be a straightforward process of financial compensation, others are looking for support, acknowledgement and apology, others for reconciliation with the Church. A survivor centred and holistic approach will work with the breadth of requests the survivor brings and seek to attend to them in a holistic way.

**Supportive and sensitive** Victims come to the Scheme, with differing experiences of abuse, many also come with the very damaging experience of re-abuse through reporting and the victim blaming actions of the Church. Survivors need a Scheme which is sensitive to their experiences and needs and seeks to treat them supportively through that.

**More than just money** Financial compensation is an important aspect of the Scheme, but the other aspects we have called for are also vital to a functional survivor-centred scheme.

**Delivers justice** Justice can mean different things for different survivors. The IICSA report into Accountability & Reparations states: *The redress which a victim or complainant may seek can include punishment of the perpetrator, compensation from an individual or institution, acknowledgement that the abuse occurred, an apology, an explanation of how the abuse was allowed to happen, an assurance of non-recurrence, and counselling or other support.*

Whilst the Scheme cannot deliver full justice, in providing independent legal support for applicants, it can show that it is acting in an open and just manner with applicants, giving them power to make choices and seek the type of redress they are looking for.

**Helping to rebuild lives** we hope the Scheme will go some way to help survivors rebuild their lives and to do this it needs to take a person-centred approach and respond to the types of redress the survivor is looking

for. A scheme which focuses primarily on a financial transaction will not be able to fulfil this hope. Provision for ongoing therapeutic support and ongoing spiritual support enables the Church to show victims that it is committed to their healing process.

**Acknowledging and recognising abuse** clear acknowledgement of abuse is important to victims and survivors. The Scheme should be aligned with Christian values, and not re-enact earlier interactions victims have had with the church (such as acting in disbelief, questioning, and demeaning survivors). It is important to avoid hierarchies of abuse in any materials and publications. Apologies should be made in the form that the survivor wants, giving them the autonomy over this, and redressing the power imbalance between victims and the church.

**Lifegiving** We hope that by including these different priorities and seeing the Scheme in a more holistic and comprehensive way, survivors will be able to engage with the Scheme in a way that is life giving for them and that will support them to recover and flourish.

**Transformative and impactful** We hope that survivors applying to the Scheme will find it helps them to move on from the abuse. No scheme can change the past, or fully compensate for it, but we hope that having a positive experience in engaging with the Scheme will enable some positive change.

**Restorative** It would be impossible for the Scheme to be entirely restorative but aiming at the Christian value of restorative justice is key. A process of truth and reconciliation, corporate apologies, and memorials must be considered as part of the Scheme. Further work is needed to capture survivor-sensitive definitions of restoration and redress, which fulfils the Church's obligation to act in a Christian manner, without making assumptions about survivor's views or response to religious terminology.

**Provides Hope** Whilst the Scheme cannot claim to be fully transformative or restorative, it should be aligned with Christian values, being morally generous, repenting of wrongdoing, and working towards shalom, in this way it can offer hope. It can also offer hope in being accountable to victims about what has occurred, and in showing how changes have been made to minimise abuse in future, and to show how better reporting systems and responding well to victims has changed the way the Church responds when abuse happens.

## Sources and Further Reading

These four papers have contributed to our understanding of redress.

Redemptive Justice. A Gospel framework for The Church of England's on-going conversation with survivors of church-related abuse by David and Sue Atkinson <https://survivorsvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Redemptive-Justice-2021.pdf>

Theology and Safeguarding: Trauma, justice, forgiveness, wholeness, experience and calling <https://survivorsvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Theology-for-safeguarding-paper.pdf>

Falling Among Thieves; Understanding and Responding to Church-Related Abuse by Andrew Graystone: [https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/temple-tracts/?fbclid=IwAR0C9j518HI8GAGnTiv6j\\_uu0mZXSxgg2lcX64JTKDj\\_eddGNdPQt2bfV4I](https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/temple-tracts/?fbclid=IwAR0C9j518HI8GAGnTiv6j_uu0mZXSxgg2lcX64JTKDj_eddGNdPQt2bfV4I)

IICSA report on Accountability and Reparations: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/investigation/accountability-reparations>