

PRESS RELEASE – KENDALL HOUSE EXTENDED REVIEW

In July 2016, we published the report of our review into Kendall House, a girls' home in Gravesend, Kent, which was run by the Dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury, and which closed in 1986. Our review considered hundreds of documents, along with interviews with 20 former residents and 15 former staff from the home. The review showed that girls who were placed at the home were subject to a harsh, sometimes cruel regime, where many were routinely given high doses of sedating medication and were vulnerable to emotional, physical and sexual abuse. We were critical of the conduct at the home, and the subsequent response by the church to concerns made by former residents. We made 19 recommendations for action by the Dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury, and a further 8 for other dioceses and national church bodies to address.

Following the publication of the report, it became clear that other former residents of Kendall House who had hitherto not engaged in the review, may now want to come forward and share their experiences of the home. We welcomed the opportunity given to us by the Bishops of Rochester and Dover, who asked us to reconvene the review panel and speak to these additional former residents. We were also asked to produce an addendum report to reflect these later accounts. This report is published on the websites of the dioceses today.

Once again, we were struck by the courage and personal strength of the women who spoke with us. Each had a powerful, often harrowing story to tell of their time in Kendall House. Four former residents spoke with us. They were resident during the early 1970s, and the early-mid 1980s. We are hugely grateful for their contribution and for the time and effort they took in revisiting painful memories from their youth. One former employee also spoke with us.

The accounts of these women are consistent with the reports we heard in the main review and provide more compelling evidence of the abusive regime at Kendall House. We heard further examples of cruelty, of over-medication, and of emotional, sexual and physical abuse. These are included in this report.

It is difficult to add meaningfully to the conclusions we made from the main review in July, and these are set out in the commentary sections of the main report. We stand by all our previous remarks concerning criticism of the governance and oversight of the home, the unacceptability of the medication regime, and the risks and realities of many other forms of abuse.

We have made a further 4 recommendations to the Dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury.

This report ends in the same manner as the main report, with descriptions from the former residents of the impact their time at Kendall House has had on their lives, their feelings, their relationships. It may have closed thirty years ago, but for so many of its former residents, the painful legacy of Kendall House is part of their daily existence today. We are truly grateful for their contributions to the main review and to this extended review.

On behalf of the Review Panel

Prof Sue Proctor

(Review Panel comprised Sue Proctor, Ray Galloway and Samantha Cohen. Biographies included in the main Kendall House report, published July 2016)