



Open Letter
Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

19th November 2024

Dear Archbishop,

As people seeking justice from the Church of England, we have come to expect a level of untruthfulness from the Church and its leaders. The arrogance of your [interview](#) in The Guardian yesterday is breathtaking.

We are the group of survivors who, after years of mistreatment by the Church of England's safeguarding 'system', trusted the Independent Safeguarding Board to deal with our complaints. We trusted the Independent Safeguarding Board to act with integrity; when it did you destroyed it.

You were integral to the decisions which cruelly ripped away our last hope of peace.

You and your advisors chose to tell the media that you were disbanding the Independent Safeguarding Board, without informing any of us. Even when warned - in the strongest possible terms – that your obsession with media management would place our lives at risk, you did it anyway.

You were integral to putting reputational management ahead of our lives.

When we asked for our complaints to be handled with independence, you and your advisors imposed a biased process, and then told the media you were working with us. When we asked for mediation, you and your advisors refused to speak to us.

You were integral to the dishonesty and denial of a just investigation of our complaints.

When Professor David Glasgow assessed your impact on us and concluded that you had caused '[significant harm](#)', including trauma and suicidal ideation, you and your advisors offered a £10 book token so a survivor could buy a self-help book.

You were integral to trivialising our abuse and denying us therapeutic help.

You state that an archbishop is not like the CEO of a company. This is true, CEOs of companies are accountable, and gross incompetence leads to dismissal. If you were the CEO of a company, it would have fallen into both moral and financial bankruptcy long ago.

If the Archbishop of Canterbury did what was "*right and honourable for the sake of the church*" by resigning, when will you do the right and honourable thing for the sake of the people affected by the Church's profound failure to safeguard children and vulnerable people from harm?

The idea that you can be a catalyst for change is ludicrous; the greatest contribution you can make to safeguarding in the Church of England is to resign.