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Former Archbishop of York 'covered up' sex abuse scandal.
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Extract from the child protection report



Sean O'Neill, Michael McKenna and Amanda Gearing
Last updated at 12:01AM, May 10 2013

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Former Archbishop of York ‘covered up’ sex abuse scandal

Sean O’Neill, Michael McKenna and Amanda Gearing

Last updated at 12:01AM, May 10 2013

The former Archbishop of York stood accused last night of covering up allegations that a senior Church of England clergyman had abused choirboys and school pupils.

Lord Hope of Thornes was made aware of the accusations against the Very Rev Robert Waddington, a former Dean of Manchester Cathedral and once the cleric in overall charge of Church schools, in 1999 and again in 2003. Waddington was stripped of his right to conduct church services but the archbishop did not report concerns about alleged past abuse or a potential continuing threat to children to police or child protection agencies.

The extent of Waddington’s alleged history of abuse and the Church’s inaction has been revealed through a joint investigation by *The Times* and *The Australian* newspaper in Sydney.

Then the second-highest ranking bishop in the Church, Lord Hope ordered internal investigations, interviewed the alleged abuser and revoked his “permission to officiate” in church. He was concerned

about Waddington's state of health, but he now admits that he was wrong not to report the case to police or social services.

"I didn't report to the police. With hindsight, probably there ought to have been [a report]. He was in such a fragile and frail state," Lord Hope said.

Waddington, who developed close links with the scandal-hit Chetham's music school while in Manchester, died of throat cancer in 2007. But Lord Hope, who was Archbishop of York from 1995 to 2005, denied any cover-up, saying that he had correctly followed the Church child protection procedures in place at the time, which did not oblige him to report the case to the authorities.

"I would strongly resist any suggestion that I was in the business of covering up anything. I would absolutely deny that. There's no way I was interested in any cover up," he added.

Internal Church files show that the Right Rev Nigel McCulloch, who was then the Bishop of Manchester, was aware of the 2003 allegations made by the family of a former cathedral chorister. A diocesan child protection report claimed that "little could be done" unless the victim himself came forward.

The Bishop, who retired this year, said last night that he had correctly followed the procedures at the time by reporting the the matter to his diocesan child protection officer and to his immediate superior, the Archbishop of York. He said: "In all honesty I think I acted properly and handled it correctly."

However, Greater Manchester Police said they were concerned that the diocese had chosen not to report the case to its detectives while Waddington was still alive.

The force was told only last October when Eli Ward, a former Manchester choirboy, made a report of his abuse to officers. Mr Ward said this week: "After so many years of suffering alone, I find myself in a position where the more research I do, the more shocking the cover-up of the Church."

Pete Saunders, chief executive of the National Association for People Abused in Childhood, said that it was "outrageous" the Church had not referred the allegations about Waddington to police. "No matter what the rules say, there is an absolute moral duty on the clergy, especially senior clergy, to report what they knew."

In Australia, where further allegations against Waddington concern physical and sexual abuse when he was headmaster of a boarding school in the 1960s, the Bishop of Queensland said that he would be referring the handling of the case to the General Synod as well as the country's recently established Royal Commission into institutional child abuse.

The revelations about Waddington and the Church's inaction heighten concern that the Anglican hierarchy's past handling of child abuse allegations mirrored that of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Church has admitted that there was "cover-up and deception" in the Diocese of Chichester, where there have been a number of historical abuse convictions. It also said that it "mishandled" the case of a former canon of Carlisle Cathedral, who was moved to a different parish in 1993 when he admitted abusing children.

But the involvement of the Church's second-highest ranking bishop in failing to report concerns makes this the most serious case to date.

Two men have waived their right to anonymity to speak about the abuse they suffered from Waddington in the belief that other victims might be encouraged to speak out.

Mr Ward and Bim Atkinson made independent allegations to the Church about Waddington. Neither man was informed by the Church of the existence of another alleged Waddington victim.

Mr Ward, 40, says that he was groomed and abused by Waddington when he was a chorister in Manchester in the 1980s. He has begun legal action against the Diocese of Manchester.

Mr Atkinson says that he suffered violent abuse when Waddington was head of St Barnabas School in Queensland and received a £50,000 compensation payout from the Church but no admission of liability.

Waddington, who was a member of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, a celibate Anglican order, was lauded in national newspaper obituaries after his death. The Times said that he “took a great interest in the choirs” at the cathedral. The Daily Telegraph said that Waddington, former general secretary of the General Synod Board of Education, had “a special gift for teaching boys”.

The Diocese of Manchester said that it was aware of “allegations of abuse from the past against a former dean of Manchester Cathedral and we are working co-operatively with the parties concerned”.

Church sources said that child protection policies and procedures had been changed since 2003 to ensure prompt reporting to the authorities of abuse allegations. Procedures in place at the time stated that there was “no automatic legal obligation on the Church to refer allegations by adults to the police or social services”.

The Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, the Right Rev Paul Butler, chairman of the Church’s National Safeguarding Committee, said that the Church’s first concern was always for the victim. “We will always apologise for past systems that let down the vulnerable and offer support to anyone whose life has been affected.”