

Press release: Bishop's review of Hillsborough families' experiences published

The review, entitled 'The Patronising Disposition of Unaccountable Power', is aimed at ensuring the pain and suffering of the Hillsborough families is not repeated.

It was commissioned by the now-Prime Minister following the conclusions of the fresh Hillsborough inquests in April 2016 so that the families' perspective was not lost.

Bishop James, who is the Home Secretary's advisor on Hillsborough, met the families in both group sessions and one-to-one as he compiled his report.

In the review, he urges the Home Secretary to help ensure that those responsible for national institutions listen to what the experiences of the Hillsborough families say about how they should conduct themselves when faced by families bereaved by public tragedy.

Bishop James' review – which includes numerous first-hand accounts of the Hillsborough families' encounters with private and public authorities – has 25 points of learning.

They include:

- the creation of a "Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy", made up a series of commitments by public bodies to change, each related to transparency and acting in the public interest
- "proper participation" of bereaved families at inquests, including publicly funded legal representation for bereaved families at inquests at which public bodies are legally represented; an end to public bodies spending limitless sums; and a change in the way in which public bodies approach inquests so they treat them not as a reputational threat but as an opportunity to learn
- the establishment of a "duty of candour" for police officers which addresses the "unacceptable behaviour" of serving or retired police officers who fail to cooperate fully with investigations into alleged criminal offences or misconduct

Bishop James also welcomes the commitment in the Queen's Speech to create an independent public advocate to act for bereaved families after a public disaster and to support them at public inquests. He stands ready to assist in

this important work.

The Right Reverend Bishop James Jones KBE said:

Over the last two decades as I have listened to what the families have endured, a phrase has formed in my mind to describe what they have come up against whenever they have sought to challenge those in authority – ‘the patronising disposition of unaccountable power’. Those authorities have been in both the public and private sectors.

The Hillsborough families know that there are others who have found that when in all innocence and with a good conscience they have asked questions of those in authority on behalf of those they love, the institution has closed ranks, refused to disclose information, used public money to defend its interests and acted in a way that was both intimidating and oppressive.

And so the Hillsborough families’ struggle to gain justice for the 96 has a vicarious quality to it so that whatever they can achieve in calling to account those in authority is of value to the whole nation.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

I am grateful to Bishop James Jones for undertaking this important piece of work. His thoughtful and considered report raises important points.

The government will now carefully study the 25 points of learning and we will provide a full response in due course.

You can [read Bishop James’ review, which was laid before Parliament today.](#)