



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **KENDALL HOUSE STATEMENT**

7 May 2009

KH2/LM/0705

The Diocese of Rochester and other bodies have received enquiries from a journalist regarding the administration of Kendall House, a residential home for young women placed in care by a number of local authorities which closed in 1986.

On 26 March 2009, the Diocese of Rochester issued the following statement:

“We understand that Teresa Cooper has historically brought various allegations to the attention of the police and social services. To date, none of these bodies have sought to investigate matters with the Diocese of Rochester.

The Diocese of Rochester is unable to discuss individual circumstances for legal reasons. It would be wrong for the Diocese to speculate on how Ms Cooper may choose to take her allegations further or what may come of them. However, if the police, social services or appropriate legal body initiates an investigation, the Diocese will cooperate fully with them.

When Ms Cooper was accommodated at Kendall House, it was run by a separate Charitable Trust under the auspices of the Diocese of Rochester. It would be inappropriate for the Diocese to initiate any internal enquiries since we are not qualified to do this. In any event, it would be essential for any investigation to be conducted both professionally and impartially.” The statement ended here.

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**The Diocese of Rochester still stands by this earlier statement. In addition, we would like to add the following:**

“The Diocese of Rochester recognises that Teresa Cooper feels her life has been blighted by events in her childhood outside of her control, and has every sympathy for her. Members of the Church of England clergy have offered Ms Cooper pastoral support and remain committed to this.

In 2007, the Crown Prosecution Service determined that there was insufficient evidence for them to bring a successful prosecution and in April 2009, the British Government declined an invitation to investigate this matter.

We understand that allegations have been made recently that the Diocese of Rochester and other bodies are involved in some sort of so-called “cover up”. We strongly refute this and repeat our earlier statement that if an appropriate legal body such as the police or social services deem it appropriate in the public interest to investigate these complex matters, we will do everything we can to assist them.

Some confusion has arisen regarding files which originated in Kendall House.

In a further genuine attempt to assist Teresa Cooper, Kent County Council prepared a report for her in December 2008, which outlined procedures concerning the archiving and retrieval of files originating in Kendall House. That report was prepared by members of staff from Kent County Council only. Neither David Grimwood nor any other member of staff employed by Church in Society had any input to the writing of the report. Kent County Council, however, have stated that they sought assistance from Church in Society in their endeavours to shed light on past

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events and asked David Grimwood to confirm the accuracy of the report once it had been drafted.

This is entirely compatible with the statement from the Diocese of Rochester that no members of Church in Society compiled this report. Any suggestion to the contrary is entirely disingenuous. As Chief Executive of Church in Society at the time, David Grimwood was not in a position to disclose information regarding previous Kendall House residents which fell outside of an individual Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act. He was careful to seek legal advice about this at the time in order to comply with and not inadvertently breach the Data Protection Act. The Diocese of Rochester believes that in so doing, David Grimwood acted correctly.

Three individual women made Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Act and Mr Adrian Spellar, employed by Church in Society at the time, has now confirmed that he furnished them with the appropriate information. One of these applicants was Teresa Cooper, and she has publicly thanked staff at Church in Society for their assistance. In April 2007 she said, "Thanks also to Church in Society, especially Adrian and David for providing information, files, listening to me when I needed someone to talk to and for their support." The Diocese of Rochester is confident that Mr Spellar acted entirely in accordance with his responsibilities at the time.

Although this unfortunately contradicts the Kent County Council report that no files were removed from the archives, we believe that this is a reflection of human error and in no way represents a deliberate attempt to mislead or misinform Ms Cooper.

We would like to reiterate that any concerns or allegations should be brought to the attention of the police and social services who have the competence to investigate them. As we have said repeatedly, we will cooperate fully with any such investigation."

**ENDS**

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