

**Public statement of 8 June 2016**

**Historic case review underway at The Baptist Union of Great Britain**

The Baptist Union of Great Britain is currently carrying out a confidential review of the files of all accredited Baptist ministers including those currently serving, retired and deceased ministers, as well as ministers who have had their accreditation removed. The specialist team handling this work are looking for any historic incidents of inappropriate behaviour or abuse recorded in these files recognising that we need to reflect on past decisions and actions, particularly those matters that were not always dealt with by our Union in accordance with best practice of the time or of today. We are also committed to acting where our actions have ongoing consequences for those involved.

This review process, approved by the BUGB Trustee Board, has started with the review of 4,500 files - the records of everyone who is or who has been an accredited Baptist minister, including files dating back to the 1940s. Any file containing information that suggests a safeguarding incident involving a minister has been passed to an independent reviewer with specialist safeguarding expertise and experience. Where immediate action has been needed, the appropriate statutory authorities have been informed and we continue to cooperate with them in their investigations. Where our independent reviewer believes that cases need further consideration, they will be presented to an independent panel of safeguarding experts. Where, in the view of the panel, there is a clear case to consider removing a minister from the accredited list, these cases will be passed to our Ministerial Recognition Committee and handled using our normal ministerial disciplinary procedures.

We expect the panel review stage and any necessary disciplinary process to be completed by the end of 2016, although we recognise that cases which have been referred to the statutory authorities will be subject to timescales beyond our control. We continue to value the input and guidance of the Charity Commission in this process.

Lynn Green, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain has emphasised the importance of this work: "As Baptists Together, we are committed to growing healthy churches in relation to God's mission, and creating and maintaining excellence in our safeguarding practice is an essential part of delivering this commitment. This sad but necessary task of historical review is part of our responsibilities in protecting children and adults at risk in Baptist churches across England and Wales."

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