

## **Passing information to the police – Guidance for Truth Project participants**

### **Why does the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse pass information to the police?**

In line with our terms of reference, the Inquiry has a duty to pass all allegations of child abuse to the police. This includes all types of child abuse - sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect - and any child that you tell us about. We pass allegations of child abuse to Operation Hydrant, the national policing team that coordinates investigations into non-recent child sexual abuse.

### **What information is shared with the police?**

The confidentiality of your information is very important to us. We do not share any of your correspondence with us, or full details of your experience. Instead, we give Operation Hydrant a summary of each allegation of child abuse that you tell us about. This might include where the abuse happened, when it happened and who the alleged perpetrators were. You do not have to give us any of these details, that is your choice.

In addition to allegations of child abuse, it may sometimes be necessary for the Inquiry to pass information about other very serious offences to the police.

### **Will you share my name and contact details with the police?**

We must pass a summary of all allegations of child abuse to the police. We will ask if you would like us to give your name and contact details to the police.

If you say yes, the police may contact you and they may investigate or take action. We will not be involved in that.

If you say no, we will pass the allegations to the police without your name and contact details.

**In a small number of situations, we may have to pass your details to the police or social care without your agreement. We will only do this if you tell us something that suggests that someone might be at risk of significant harm.**

You can tell us how you would prefer the police to contact you, for example by email or phone, and we will pass this on. Because we are independent of the police, we cannot guarantee if, when or how the police may contact you, and we won't be involved in any action they take.

**What if I have previously reported the abuse to the police? What if the perpetrator has been convicted or is deceased?**

We pass all allegations of child abuse to Operation Hydrant, even if they have been previously reported, the perpetrator has already been convicted and/or the perpetrator is believed to be deceased. This is so the police can use the information to identify:

- whether the perpetrator poses any ongoing risk to children or others;
- whether anyone known to the perpetrator poses any ongoing risk; and
- any other information or intelligence that could lead to further investigation.

If your name and contact details are shared with the allegation of abuse, the police may still contact you even if you have previously reported the abuse, the perpetrator has been convicted and/or the perpetrator is deceased.

**What if I am currently in contact with the police or involved in an investigation?**

We will still need to pass any allegations of child abuse on to the police. If you would like us to pass your contact details to the police, you can tell us if you are currently involved in a police investigation or currently in contact with the police. We will then include that information with the allegations.

If you are involved in criminal proceedings relating to what you share with the Inquiry, we might receive a request to disclose the information we hold. For example, information might be requested by either the prosecution or defence teams where an individual is being prosecuted for child sexual abuse. We will only pass on this information without your consent if we are ordered by a court to do so.

**When will you pass information to Operation Hydrant?**

In most cases, we will pass information to Operation Hydrant within a few weeks, after you have shared your experience with the Truth Project. However, if you tell us something that suggests someone might be at risk of significant harm, we may need to share information with the police or other relevant authorities, such as social care, sooner – possibly within 24 hours.

If you decide not to share your experience with the Inquiry, we will still need to pass any allegations of child abuse that you have already told us about to Operation Hydrant. We will not share your name and contact details, unless we believe that someone might be at risk of significant harm.

### **What does Operation Hydrant do with the information?**

Operation Hydrant acts as a single point of contact for the Inquiry, receiving and passing allegations of child abuse to the relevant police forces. Operation Hydrant does not investigate any allegations of abuse. Operation Hydrant will pass the information to the police forces local to where the abuse took place and where the people involved live. The police force responsible for where the abuse took place has the power to investigate an allegation.

### **What will the police force do?**

The police force will assess the information and decide what action needs to be taken. If your contact details have been shared, a police officer or member of police staff may contact you to discuss the information you gave us. If the police do make contact with you, it can take a few days or weeks, or sometimes longer, and is dependent on the force and the nature of the information you gave us.

If you have told us how you would prefer the police to contact you, the police will try to contact you in this way if they are able to. It is important to note that the Inquiry is independent of the police and cannot intervene in police matters. We have no control over how the police choose to act on the information shared and we cannot guarantee if, when or how the police will contact you.

## **Can I withdraw my consent to share my contact details with the police?**

Yes, we are happy to record that you have changed your mind and we will respect your wishes as soon as possible after you let us know. However, please note that information may be passed to Operation Hydrant very soon after you provide us with your consent.

If you have provided consent, and told us something that suggests someone may be at risk of significant harm, we may have shared the information with Operation Hydrant within 24 hours. If you withdraw your consent after we have already shared your contact details with the police, we will inform Operation Hydrant of your wishes, who will in turn inform the relevant police forces. Please note we will not have any control over the way the police may use your contact details after they have received them. At that point we are only able to pass on your decision and ask them to update their systems.

If you are unsure whether you want us to give your contact details to the police, it is better to select 'no' when asked to consent and contact us later if you wish to change your mind.

You may withdraw your consent at any time by emailing us at [contact@iicsa.org.uk](mailto:contact@iicsa.org.uk) or calling 0800 917 1000 and we will promptly update our systems and inform Operation Hydrant if your contact details have already been shared.

## **How do I complain about the police?**

If you wish to make a complaint about the police, you can contact either the Professional Standards Department of the relevant police force and/or the Independent Office for Police Conduct. The Inquiry is independent of the police and cannot investigate complaints about organisations other than the Inquiry.

You may wish to share your concerns with the Professional Standards Department, even if you do not want to make a formal complaint. This is so that the police force can identify and address any issues, for example training needs.

## **Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)**

Email: [enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 020 0096 (press 2 at prompt)

Address: Independent Office for Police Conduct, PO Box 473, Sale, M33 0BW

Website: [www.policeconduct.gov.uk](http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk)

Twitter: [@iopc\\_enquiries](https://twitter.com/iopc_enquiries)

**If you have any questions about the information provided here, please get in touch:**

Email us at [contact@iicsa.org.uk](mailto:contact@iicsa.org.uk)

Call us on 0800 917 1000 Open weekdays 9am-5pm. Calls are free and do not show on your bill.

Write to us: Freepost IICSA Independent Inquiry. You do not need a stamp.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing and would like assistance, contact our service partners [SignHealth](#)