

## **Executive Summary (Final Report)**

1.1. In February 2013 the Home Office Permanent Secretary commissioned an Independent Review of all Home Office files from 1979 to 1999 to identify any information received about organised child sex abuse. An experienced investigator from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) led the Review with additional oversight provided by HMRC's Director of Criminal Investigation.

1.2. In April 2013 the Independent Investigator produced an Interim Report on contacts on child abuse between the late Geoffrey Dickens MP and the Home Office. This Final Report addresses the remaining terms of reference of the Review and covers all relevant material held by the Home Office for the period 1979 to 1999. The Review has not identified any additional material relating to matters covered in the Interim Report.

1.3. The Independent Investigator has had all necessary access to Home Office records and has received full co-operation from Home Office personnel.

1.4. The Independent Review carried out an extensive analysis of a central database containing details of over 746,000 files for the 1979-1999 period and identified 527 potentially relevant files which had been retained. These 527 files plus 46 personnel files (573 in total) were all physically examined by the Independent Review.

### **Information provided to the Home Office in relation to alleged child abuse**

1.5. This work identified 13 items of information about alleged child abuse, including 4 cases involving Home Office staff. Nine of these items of information, including all of the cases involving Home Office staff, were either already known to the Police or were reported to them by the Home Office at the time.

Recommendation 1. The Investigator considers that the remaining 4 items of information are likely to be of limited value, as they are either of doubtful credibility or involve the use of a single profile indicator to identify a potential offender. However it is recommended that the information is passed to the Police for a proper assessment as this falls within their remit.

### **Involvement of Home Office staff**

1.6. The 4 cases involving Home Office staff relate to offences in the period 1996 to 1998. None of the cases contain evidence of the direct physical abuse of children. The Investigator found no evidence of any connection between the cases, or that Home Office equipment or facilities were used in the offences. All 4 staff were dismissed.

1.7. However, there is no central record of the detail of disciplinary offences for the 1979 to 1999 period. It is therefore possible that there may be additional cases of dismissals, or other disciplinary action short of dismissal, which relate to relevant

offences and which have not been identified. This also means that there is no central record of any cases where false allegations have been investigated and disproved.

Recommendation 2. That the Home Office review its current system for centrally recording details of disciplinary cases to ensure that it meets current business needs.

### **Paedophile Information Exchange**

1.8. The Review identified 11 centrally recorded files from the 1980s relating to the Paedophile Information Exchange, all of which had been destroyed. The recorded file titles, together with media reports of events at the time, give some indication of the probable contents of these files from which the Investigator has concluded that their destruction was consistent with applicable record retention policies.

### **Allegation of Historic Child Abuse**

1.9. The Review identified one file containing copies of details of allegations relating to a previous Police investigation into alleged child sex abuse. It is clear that the documents were considered by both Police and Prosecutors at the time but they may have some relevance to an ongoing Police investigation into historic cases of abuse.

Recommendation 3. That material from one file containing details of allegations previously investigated by Police is referred to a current Police investigation into allegations of historic child sex abuse.

### **Conclusions**

1.10. The Independent Investigator is satisfied that the Home Office did pass on to the appropriate authorities any information received about child abuse in the period 1979 to 1999 which was credible and which had any realistic potential for further investigation. The Investigator believes that the risk of any undisclosed material remaining in files from that period is extremely low.

1.11. The Home Office took appropriate and proportionate action in the identified cases involving Home Office staff. In the absence of detailed central records of disciplinary cases for the period it is not possible to give an assurance that all relevant cases have been identified. The Investigator found no evidence of any unresolved allegations against Home Office staff or of any related complaints.