

Dear

I write as a local resident and reader of your paper to request you cover a matter of great importance.

At **midday on September 2nd 2021** the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales (IICSA) will release its report into Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings (CPIROS). The report will include Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism and non-conformist Christian denominations. Further information can be found here: [Child Protection in religious organisations and settings | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#)

While there has been a lot of media attention in recent years regarding mainstream religions such as the Roman Catholic Church, abuse within smaller faith groups has received little coverage. However, a larger investigation into child sexual abuse in Australia, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013-2017), found that Jehovah's Witnesses alone had 1,006 suspected child molesters reported to leaders within the religion, yet the group did not report even one of these to the police.

Proportionally speaking, child sexual abuse is a far greater problem among Jehovah's Witnesses than in the Anglican and Roman Catholic communities. Here in the UK there are over 140,000 Jehovah's Witnesses, double that of Australia. It is therefore reasonable to extrapolate potentially double the number of suspected child molesters – over 2,000. And in many cases it has been found that a child molester will abuse multiple victims.

A key factor in the preponderance of child sexual abuse among Jehovah's Witness is the "two witness rule." Jehovah's Witnesses believe that if there is an accusation of wrongdoing, including the abuse of children, the incident cannot be acted upon "judicially" by elders as though it really happened unless there are two witnesses to the incident (unlikely given the issue at hand).

An organizational aversion to reporting is a further failing. Jehovah's Witness elders are instructed to report all abuse accusations to their branch office rather than notifying the police. The branch office takes it upon itself to decide whether abuse can be reported depending on what the local reporting laws are. In England and Wales there is currently no mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse.

Furthermore, the organization has a documented policy of compiling data on all abuse accusations while not sharing this data with police. This policy has resulted in the group maintaining a secret abuse database at the Jehovah's Witness headquarters in Chelmsford. As previously mentioned, the number of abusers currently recorded on this database likely numbers into the thousands.

Unfortunately, while IICSA had the statutory powers to commission a full independent audit into the abuse records held by Jehovah's Witnesses for use in its findings, it has refused to do so - despite more than 6,000 signing a petition demanding full disclosure. A summary of the situation can be found here: [The child abuse inquiry has been too deferential to the Jehovah's Witnesses - National Secular Society \(secularism.org.uk\)](#)

As mentioned, the contents of IICSA's report will be available on September 2nd, but in the interests of accurate journalism, I wanted to reach out and notify you of this development. I would be happy to connect you with potential interviewees and documented evidence to support all of the above.

Yours sincerely,

Key statistics and links to further information

IICSA press release on publishing date: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/news/inquiry-announces-publication-date-child-protection-religious-organisations-and-settings-report>

Recordings of the hearings are available on YouTube via the IICSA channel: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQrDHIqFcNwG__21ayig2YHDNwj9J3F-C

8,695,808 active Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide

141,412 active Jehovah's Witnesses in Britain

1,615 Jehovah's Witness congregations across Britain

(Source: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/2020-service-year-report/2020-country-territory/>)