

Stephen Peach

sent by email

Charity Commission Direct  
PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG

t: 0151 703 1756  
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**Your Ref:**

**Our Ref:** JR/242715/AU

**Date:** 20 October 2011

Dear Mr Peach

**THE TRUST OF ST BENEDICT'S ABBEY EALING - REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 242715**

I am writing further to your email of 19 September which referred to a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked: *Did the Charity Commission receive any referrals (if so how many and when) regarding alleged child abuse at St Benedict's School Ealing in regard to Clergy. What actions in response to these allegations did the Charity Commission take?*

I would like to begin by making some general points about the FOIA. The FOIA obliges public authorities to provide information upon request, however, it contains a number of exemptions from the general right to access information. These exemptions set out the limits of the right of access to information under the Act. There are two different types of exemption. *Qualified* exemptions are subject to a public interest test. Such an exemption does not justify withholding information, unless, following a proper assessment, the balance of the public interest weighs against disclosure. In contrast, requested information may fall within an *absolute* exemption, which means that the Commission is under no obligation to consider the request further because the information is exempt and there is no requirement to assess for disclosure in the public interest. In addition, in certain qualifying circumstances, there is no obligation to confirm or deny the existence of the information or to disclose the information.

Turning to your request, I can confirm that the Commission does hold information which falls within the parameters of your request.

The Commission has received complaints regarding alleged child sexual abuse relating to the clergy at St Benedict's School Ealing. The Commission investigated some of these allegations as part of two statutory inquiries conducted by the Charity Commission between 2006 and 2009. I have enclosed a copy of the inquiry report. Although there were two inquiries there is just one report. You will appreciate that there is an overlap in respect of the two inquiries which is

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explained in paragraph 31 of the report. Therefore this report covers both of the Commission's inquiries into the Charity.

Section 32 of the FOIA provides that information which forms part of a statutory Charity Commission inquiry is exempt from disclosure. Therefore all information which the Commission holds in connection with the two inquiries mentioned above is exempt from disclosure and, apart from the inquiry report, I am not disclosing any information about those inquiries.

Following the close of the statutory inquiries referred to above the Commission has taken no further regulatory action in connection with this charity.

This completes my consideration of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

If you are unhappy with our response to your FOI request, have a complaint or wish to request a review of our FOI decision, you should write to: Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, LIVERPOOL, L69 3UG. Please state what it is you are dissatisfied with, which will assist us when we review our response.

If you request a Decision Review you will be notified of our final decision. Please note that we will accept requests for a Decision Review up to a maximum of 3 months after the original decision. The 3 months will be calculated from the date on which you receive written notification of the original decision. You will be deemed to have received written notification on the day after the letter enclosing the decision was sent or the same day if the decision was sent by email.

If after this you remain unhappy with the decision, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Reid

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