

Open Letter

To: Redress Church of England
Also by email: redress@churchofengland.org

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27 August 2025

Dear Sir or Madam

Redress Scheme Data Breach

You will no doubt be aware of the email sent at 17:34 on 26 August 2025 to individuals who had registered to receive updates about the Church of England Redress Scheme ('the Scheme').

I received the email myself as I had registered for updates for professional purposes. I was dismayed to see that the email openly copied in nearly 200 other recipients.

Upon becoming aware of this, I deleted the email in accordance with my firm's data protection policy.

My own professional email address is already in the public domain so I do not write out of concern for myself. But naturally many of the individuals who had registered for updates about the Scheme did so in a personal capacity and/or because they are survivors of abuse within the Church of England.

The release of the names and email addresses of those individuals was a breach of their rights under the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights pursuant to s.6 Human Rights Act 1998.

As a firm that acts for many survivors of church abuse, we are aware of considerable distress caused by the breach. In addition to having their personal details unlawfully released, individuals have been identified as potential survivors of abuse, not least because the email began "*Dear Prospective Applicant*" (referring to prospective applicants to the Scheme).

Further, on its [webpage](#) inviting individuals to register for updates to the Scheme, the Church of England specifically assured prospective applicants that the website is run by an independent Scheme administrator and that "*Your email address will not be shared with the Church of England*". Yet I have been informed that several recipients of the email – who would have been able to see the other addresses in copy – were Church of England email addresses.

The implementation of the Scheme has been long-awaited by survivors, although not without concern about its independence and fairness. The fact that survivors have had their privacy breached at the very first hurdle has left them questioning whether the Scheme can be trusted at all.

I am writing to ask that you:

1. Issue an apology to all of those affected by the data breach;

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2. Self-refer the breach to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), in accordance with your obligations under the GDPR;
3. Publish on the Church of England's website the steps you will be taking to ensure that such a breach does not occur in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HCT'.

Hayley Chapman-Todd, Senior Solicitor
BOLT BURDON KEMP