

STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF WORKPLACE CULTURE AT SAVE THE CHILDREN UK

In March 2018, following intense media attention into the handling of historic allegations of sexual harassment, the Chief Executive of Save the Children UK Kevin Watkins commissioned an Independent Review of Workplace Culture.

The Independent Review was chaired by organisational ethicist, Dr Suzanne Shale, supported by a panel of colleagues who brought expertise from the fields of organisational culture and systems, complex investigations and human resource management.

The charity and the Independent Review panel have been scrupulous in maintaining the Review's independence throughout the process. There were no pre-existing relationships between the Review panel and the charity. The Independent Review reflects the views and experiences of over one thousand former and current staff, volunteers and trustees gathered in confidence during the panel's work, and expresses the opinion of the Independent Review Chair.

We would like to acknowledge those among the charity's current and former staff who have persisted in raising uncomfortable subjects over time. We wish to recognise the feelings of anger and distress that were expressed during some of our meetings with participants in the Independent Review, and to thank them greatly for their contribution. We also value the efforts that the charity's Chair, Trustees and managers have made to provide the Independent Review panel with the information it has needed.

Workplace cultures comprise a complex mix of layers of history, the everyday experiences of today, and individual and collective aspirations for the future. The Independent Review panel has used an explicitly ethical lens to understand the charity's cultures, seeking to comprehend the moral expectations that people have of it and the values that permeate its workplace.

Our Independent Review suggests that for the most part, people experience Save the Children UK as a supportive and collegiate workplace, and the majority of people working in the charity have not experienced negative behaviours. However, a minority have had unhappy experiences. Any experiences of interpersonal mistreatment at work are disturbing. They can cause particularly high levels of distress when people are committed both personally and professionally to protecting others who are vulnerable.

Our report makes clear that the charity is by no means alone in finding that their employees experience incivility or worse at work. We cite data indicating that public sector organisations such as the NHS, the Civil Service and other third sector organisations experience similar difficulties. We hope that this report will be of value not only to Save the Children UK and its employees, but also to other organisations seeking to provide a fair, inclusive and safe workplace where all their people can do their very best work.

The Independent Review of
WORKPLACE CULTURE
at Save the Children UK

Enhancing the charity's workplace culture will require both decisive leadership from those at the top, and sustained collaboration with a wider group of staff drawn from every level in the organisation.

I am very grateful to all those who have participated in this Independent Review, and to the panel of experts who have gathered and analysed a vast amount of information from multiple sources. It has been our great privilege to work with Save the Children UK over the past six months, and we wish the charity great success as it builds a trusting and supportive workplace fit for the extraordinary people who work to fulfill its extraordinary cause.

We have prepared a very detailed report for Save the Children UK and this has also been provided to the Charity Commission. In line with the charity's original commitment the report will be published in full via its website. The Independent Review panel will therefore not be providing any further comment beyond this statement.

Dr Suzanne Shale
Chair, Independent Review of Workplace Culture at Save the Children UK