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- About
  - [Biography](#)
  - [Installation](#)
  - [Job Vacancies](#)
- [Articles](#)
  - [Audio](#)
  - [Video](#)
  - [Press Releases](#)
  - [Articles](#)
- [CRE](#)
  - [Empowering communities to reach their potential](#)
  - [CRE: First Six Months in Review](#)
  - [Case Studies](#)
  - [CRE Application Form](#)
- [Contact](#)

## Statement on Sexual Abuse

26 May 2015

The conviction of a prominent member of the Manchester Jewish community for sexual abuse is of immense significance. Though certainly not the first such case, it sends an unequivocal message that nobody, in any part of our community, can expect to commit these horrific crimes and escape prosecution. The longstanding view of the Chief Rabbi and Beth Din has been restated a number of times in recent years, but this is an opportune moment to reinforce that position once again.

I would like to commend the victims and others who withstood tremendous pressure and gave evidence. I hope that their courage will inspire others to come forward in the future.

This kind of abuse is a stain on all of society and we are no less vulnerable to the scourge of sexual crimes than any other community. Perpetrators of these crimes destroy lives and every one of us shares in the responsibility to protect victims and potential victims. As such, we must not only ensure that all incidents are reported to the police without delay, but that we must do everything in our power to promote a culture whereby reporting such crimes to the relevant statutory authorities is supported and encouraged.

It is imperative that communities across the country have robust child protection policies in place and should act in consultation with the statutory services. Every community should

review its policies and procedures regularly and consider what else can be done – we can always do more.

Further to previously held training seminars for Rabbis, I will be writing this week to Rabbis across the country, advising them of a mandatory, dedicated seminar that the United Synagogue is organising on behalf of its communities, in order to better prepare Rabbis to identify and respond to incidents of child abuse in their communities and to reinforce the importance of being vigilant at all times. In addition, I am meeting with victims of abuse and campaigners in this area to seek views from them as to what more can be done to better protect vulnerable people in our communities.

May we all have the courage to seek out and challenge cruelty and injustice from within our midst.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

## Archives

- [May 2015](#)
- [April 2015](#)
- [March 2015](#)
- [February 2015](#)
- [January 2015](#)
- [December 2014](#)
- [November 2014](#)
- [October 2014](#)
- [September 2014](#)
- [August 2014](#)
- [July 2014](#)
- [June 2014](#)
- [May 2014](#)
- [April 2014](#)
- [March 2014](#)
- [February 2014](#)
- [January 2014](#)
- [December 2013](#)
- [November 2013](#)
- [September 2013](#)

## Recent articles

- [\*\*Statement on Sexual Abuse\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The Chief Rabbi's Message for Yom Haatzmaut\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The Chief Rabbi's Message for Pesach 5775\*\*](#)

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  - [Biography](#)
  - [Installation](#)
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- [Articles](#)
  - [Audio](#)
  - [Video](#)
  - [Press Releases](#)
  - [Articles](#)
- [CRE](#)
  - [Empowering communities to reach their potential](#)
  - [CRE: First Six Months in Review](#)
  - [Case Studies](#)
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