

Sooner or later another child's life will depend on it.

Make Mandatory Reporting of child abuse the law in Regulated Activities.

Daniel Pelka suffered a catalogue of vicious injuries, starvation and neglect before his death at the hands of his mother and step-father, aged four years; Magdalena Łuczak and Mariusz Krężolek are now serving life sentences for his murder.

The report of the Serious Case Review into Daniel's death revealed serious questions around the roles of various professionals; particularly, staff at his school had a 'duty of care' for Daniel's well-being, but failed to intervene to save his life. Although Daniel's suffering was internally documented, no one followed the 'statutory guidance' issued by the DfE; no formal external report was made.

No one has been held accountable for their failure to report Daniel's abuse, because reporting abuse is not currently the law in the UK - except in Northern Ireland, where Mandatory Reporting laws already exist, along with other parts of Europe and most of the Commonwealth. This critical hole in the law leaves many other children seriously at risk of abuse.

The government offers advice that staff working in Regulated Activities 'should' report child abuse; this is what the DfE refers to as its 'statutory guidance' (which is an oxymoron in itself since guidance cannot be statutory by definition). There is no instruction that staff 'must' report even known child abuse and so there is no legal deterrent, no accountability and no consequence for failure to do so.

There are many reasons why a member of staff working in Regulated Activities might not report abuse, ranging from self-doubt and fear of getting it wrong, through to institutional loyalty or fear of internal retribution. The introduction of Daniel's Law would remove the burden of responsibility experienced by staff faced with child abuse; new legislation would both require and support staff to make a report.

Many professionals working in Regulated Activities (early years, schools, children's homes, hospitals and other places of 'safety') are aware that child abuse is occurring right now – many will do nothing to report or address it because there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

Let's not wait for another child to die or be seriously injured, let's not wait for another case of institutional sexual abuse to be uncovered. We shouldn't need another Serious Case Review to remind us of the lessons we need to learn – support the Campaign for Daniel's Law and Mandate Now, make Mandatory Reporting in Regulated Activities the law.

Sign here:

www.change.org/danielslaw

Find out more here:

www.thesurvivorstrust.org/news/mandatory-reporting-5-minute-guide

Supporters include 94,000 signatures, MPs and Shadow Ministers, Former Director of Public Prosecution, police commissioners, children's protection charities, Church of England and RC Church...

