

Compensation scheme set up for Sean Bell's victims

Victims of Sean Bell a social worker with The City of Edinburgh Council and who was a prolific abuser are being invited to claim compensation.

A redress scheme for people who suffered at the hands of Sean Bell was launched today (September 5) which the council said 'provides an alternative to those considering pursuing a claim through the civil court'.

Bell, a former senior social worker, faced criminal charges for a catalogue of abuse during his 30-year career in the council when he was found dead at the foot of Salisbury Crags in 2020.

Victims described him as "a predatory, controlling, serial abuser – sexually, physically, emotionally and psychologically".

They added: "To The City of Edinburgh Council, we say this – it is your fault Sean Bell's repeated abuse was allowed to continue for so long. Learn the lessons and never let this happen again."

A subsequent investigation confirmed Bell was protected by an "old boys network" operating in the council, and made several recommendations towards ensuring allegations of abuse and violence are investigated independently in future.

Susanne Tanner, QC, who was commissioned to write the report

on Mr Bell and how complaints against him were handled, also urged the local authority to compensate survivors of his behaviour.

The redress scheme will remain open until March 4, 2023. Anyone who considers themselves eligible for compensation, or is seeking more information, is asked to email CECRedressScheme@PinsentMasons.com

The council said: “It provides an alternative to those considering pursuing a claim through the civil courts. The Council considers that, in the context of the allegations made, paying compensation under the scheme rules is the right thing to do in order to give eligible survivors a level of closure as soon as possible.”

Council Leader Cammy Day said: “We’ve offered a wholehearted apology and our sympathies to those who suffered abuse at the hands of the late Sean Bell and have made significant progress against the comprehensive implementation plan agreed by councillors earlier this year.

“The scheme, which will ensure appropriate compensation for those who suffered physical and/or sexual abuse, will be administered by independent law firm Pinsent Masons.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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