

Carey junior's special pleading "an insult to victims", says NSS

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The son of the former Archbishop of Canterbury has said "changing attitudes" are behind criticism of his father's handling of a sexual abuse scandal.

Last week an independent report criticised the Church of England's response to abuse carried out by disgraced bishop Peter Ball. It severely censured Lord Carey, who led the Church from 1991 to 2002. In response he resigned from an honorary role in the Church, under pressure from Justin Welby, the current Archbishop of Canterbury.

The National Secular Society has described Andrew Carey's remarks as "an insult to the victims". In 2015 Ball was imprisoned for grooming and abusing 18 young men between 1977 and 1992. He was first accused in 1992 and cautioned for gross indecency in 1993. One of his victims, Neil Todd, committed suicide in 2012 – although his abuse first came to light in 1993.

The review found that Ball had escaped justice for 20 years and Lord Carey, who led the Church from 1991 to 2002 and spoke out in Ball's defence, had "colluded" with him.

In his regular column for *The Church of England* newspaper yesterday, Andrew Carey wrote that he was "struck by the absence of any public expression of sadness and sympathy for my father from the current crop of archbishops and bishops".

"He has been criticised over handling safeguarding," he added. "To be criticised like this is like the sin against the Holy Spirit, unforgivable in the Church of England.

"It's no matter that the term 'safeguarding' hadn't even been coined when Bishop Peter Ball's crimes were first reported. Twenty-five years later you are held accountable for cultural attitudes and standards that are totally different today."

Keith Porteous Wood, NSS executive director, said Andrew Carey was "trying to place his father beyond judgement".

"Such attitudes held by self-styled princes of both Catholic and Anglican churches are a major contributory cause to the widespread and longstanding clerical abuse of minors.

"Over decades lives were ruined and a man killed himself before Ball was brought to justice. The explanation that Lord Carey's intransigence and collusion were the products of a different time simply does not hold water.

"I am less concerned about him being above criticism, though, than above the law. When are we going to hear from the police that Lord Carey is helping them with their enquiries?"

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