

A Jimmy Savile sex scandal concealed during the 1997 General Election

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The man who now leads the NHS Confederation failed to tell either Parliament or the public of a 1995 sex scandal at Broadmoor hospital, involving 'a member of staff' who – it can now be revealed – was Jimmy Savile.

The Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell served as Health Secretary in Sir John Major's Government between 1995 and 1997 and did not disclose the scandal when he learned of it in the final year of Major's premiership. Mr Dorrell was informed by an official review that 'a member of Broadmoor's staff' had been investigated by police over allegations involving a child. It has not been possible to establish if Mr Dorrell made any attempt to learn the identity of the offender, or if he informed Cabinet colleagues about the incident.

The Savile scandal might have come to light during Savile's lifetime – and the offences he committed after 1997 could have been prevented – if the information had been disclosed in a timely manner.

Speaking in Parliament in 2014, after publication of the report of the official investigation into Savile's behaviour at Broadmoor, the current Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt MP, said:

'... if there is evidence that people have criminally neglected claims that were made at the time or behaved inappropriately—even if it is not a matter for the law and they behaved in a way that could make them subject to disciplinary procedures in NHS organisations—that should be addressed.'¹

Continuing to address Parliament about the events that led Savile to take up an official post at Broadmoor, first as part of a task force and then as Chairman of the hospital's Advisory Committee, Mr Hunt said: 'Everyone must be held accountable for the actions they took.'

The report received by Mr Dorrell in 1997 stated:

'The review team were specifically requested to assess the handling of a child visitor allegation, investigated in 1995 as a hospital complaint with

¹ <<http://tinyurl.com/l75tleu>> or <[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2014-06-26/debates/1406266700001/NHSInvestigations\(JimmySavile\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2014-06-26/debates/1406266700001/NHSInvestigations(JimmySavile))>

police involvement. The relevant documentation associated with the allegation was reviewed by the team. This was made more difficult than it should have been because no management report was compiled at the time. From the information available to the review team, it seems that the incident was handled appropriately and effectively, and the police found insufficient evidence to take the matter forward. As a result of the incident the hospital's visitors policy for children was revised.'

Broadmoor's general manager at the time was Alan Franey, who had enjoyed a professional relationship with Savile since working with him at Leeds General Infirmary. Mr Franey, now retired, says that he has no recollection today of the 1995 incident and no idea who it might have involved.

The 1997 report was, itself, examined by the official inquiry into Savile at Broadmoor led by the highly-respected Dr Bill Kirkup CBE, which reported in 2014.² The Kirkup report does not mention the 1995 incident, despite referring to several other pages in the same NHS document. Dr Kirkup has stated:

'It would be disappointing if any of the staff we spoke to had not raised this incident, either when interviewed or by responding to the appeal made at the time for anyone who wished to impart information.'³

The key witness against Savile, however, told his story on national television the same month that Dr Kirkup's investigation was being set up. Bob Allen, 65, worked at Broadmoor between 1974 and 2001 and is adamant that he was never approached by Dr Kirkup's team, despite the fact that Dr Kirkup's inquiry set out to identify and contact important witnesses.

In October 2012, Channel 4 News broadcast an interview conducted by reporter Paraic O'Brien, in which Mr Allen recounted how he had witnessed Savile enter Broadmoor premises with a 14-15 year old girl in tow, take her into his private on-site apartment and dim the lights.⁴ Mr Allen informed a superior, who told Mr Allen the next day: 'No one appears to be interested.'

The superior was night superintendent Arnold Livesey, now deceased, who Mr Allen remembers as 'one of the better guys at the hospital'.

² *Jimmy Savile Investigation: Broadmoor Hospital*, report to Department of Health and West London Mental Health Trust (June 2014): <<http://tinyurl.com/me5z2dl>> or <http://socialwelfare.bl.uk/subject-areas/services-client-groups/adults-mental-health/departmentofhealth/165038Broadmoor_report.pdf>

³ Email 16 March 2017

⁴ C4 News, Paraic O'Brien 12 October 2012 (first appearance of Bob Allen's allegations, background details, and Currie 2012 quote): <<http://tinyurl.com/kje353v>> or <<https://www.channel4.com/news/broadmoor-savile-was-a-lunatic-in-charge-of-the-asylum>>.

It is not clear what happened behind the scenes after Mr Livesey was informed about Savile's conduct and Mr Allen could recall only that the incident happened in the mid-1990s. Mr Allen was never interviewed by police, and he believed that the matter had been dropped, but the 1997 NHS document shows that it was handled in secret.⁵

Broadmoor's local police force, Thames Valley Police, now say that today, some 22 years after the incident, they cannot locate any record relating to the original complaint.⁶

The 1997 NHS report was created at the behest of Mr Dorrell during his time as Health Secretary, following allegations in the national press of 'drugs finds and a possible child pornography ring at Broadmoor'.⁷ Mr Dorrell received the ensuing report in April 1997. Mr Dorrell did not mention the report in public again, and left office at the General Election that followed in May 1997. Alan Franey, the previously mentioned chief executive of Broadmoor Hospital, was also gone in the summer of 1997. He claimed, 'It has always been my intention to retire early...'⁸

No more was ever heard of the matter until 1999 when a report was put to Parliament which stated that in 1997:

'Mr Dorrell ordered a review of the hospital to investigate the truth or otherwise of the allegations. The review demonstrated that most of the allegations made so vociferously in the media were unfounded.

The Review team demonstrated that most of the allegations made so vociferously in the media were unfounded. '⁹

By the time the report – originally commissioned by Mr Dorrell for the Conservatives – was published, Labour were in power. That less than two years old Government failed to tell Parliament how the review found 'a member of Broadmoor's staff' had brought a child onto the premises overnight.

⁵ Telephone interviews 18 February and 16 March 2017

⁶ Email 28 April 2017

⁷ See, for example, *Independent* 17 February 1997: <<https://tinyurl.com/kb9ynp6>> or <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/broadmoor-denies-child-porn-ring-1279132.html>>"

⁸ See *Independent* 3 June 1997: <<https://tinyurl.com/lk8tsba>> or <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/broadmoor-chief-resigns-1254020.html>>

⁹ HMSO, *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Personality Disorder Unit, Ashworth Special Hospital*, 1999 (details on Dorrell's review, Franey, general Broadmoor concerns): <<http://tinyurl.com/kaaqh39>> or <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265696/4194.pdf>

If Parliament or the public had been told in 1999, when Savile had over a decade left to live, future offences might have been prevented.

In 1988 Thatcher Government junior health minister Edwina Currie had appointed Savile to lead a task force to tackle various problems at Broadmoor. The entertainer had cultivated Ms Currie with a series of evening meals at the exclusive Athenaeum Club on London's Pall Mall,¹⁰ which Savile had joined some years earlier with the sponsorship of Cardinal Basil Hume.¹¹ It was at the Athenaeum that Savile met with Ms Currie's departmental under-secretary Clifford Graham to arrange for the appointment to the Broadmoor task force of Alan Franey,¹² who had previously worked with Savile at Leeds General Infirmary.¹³

In 2012, Ms Currie said:

'What [Savile] did have, as I know for certain, is information which gave him a hold over staff. That could explain why they said nothing, even with their knowledge or suspicion of his misbehaviour. As a result ministers were never given the information, when we could have barred him from the place.'¹⁴

Ms Currie left the Department of Health in December 1988 and left the House of Commons at the 1997 General Election.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said:

'Dr Kirkup's investigation into allegations of abuse by Jimmy Savile at Broadmoor Hospital reviewed relevant documents, identified people to interview, issued public appeals for information. A record reviewed by Dr Kirkup's team did discuss an incident in which a child visitor was allowed on the premises with a member of staff. The record in question did not identify the member of staff involved in the incident and Dr Bill Kirkup has advised the Department of Health that he heard no suggestion that it

¹⁰ Edwina Currie, *Diaries*, volume one (1987-92), p. 88 (Athenaeum dinners with Savile).

¹¹ *Daily Telegraph* 12 October 2012 (Hume as Athenaeum sponsor): <<http://tinyurl.com/lgv2eoj>> or <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/celebritynews/9596850/Sir-Jimmy-Savile-causes-anguish-at-the-Athenaeum.html>>

¹² *Daily Mail* 28 October 2013 (more details on Savile and Franey's Athenaeum meeting): <<http://tinyurl.com/n35bn9l>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2478143/Jimmy-Savile-given-key-position-Broadmoor-personally-selected-hospitals-bosses.html>>

¹³ Charles Kaye and Alan Franey, *Managing High Security Psychiatric Care*, (Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 1998), p. 35 (Franey acknowledges meeting at Athenaeum)

¹⁴ See the final paragraph of the report in *Guardian* 1 November 2012 <<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/oct/31/jimmy-savile-itv>>.

might have been Savile from anyone interviewed.¹⁵

Stephen Dorrell and the NHS Confederation were both contacted and declined to comment.

The 1997 NHS document, which was obtained via the Freedom of Information Act, has now been passed to the ongoing Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse led by Professor Alexis Jay OBE.

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¹⁵ Email, 2 May 2017