



Wass Report Update

The Wass Inquiry was commissioned to address 'Allegations Surrounding Child Safeguarding Issues on St Helena and Ascension Island'. These allegations came to light through a number of highly publicised newspaper articles, leaked documents and allegations made by previous employees. These allegations were further inflamed by the publication of a confidential report from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, which had previously been asked to look at community assessment.

The majority of this Inquiry focussed on St Helena and the main conclusion was that there was no evidence of corruption in Saint Helena or on Ascension Island.

It recognised that there were and are instances of child abuse on St Helena but that it is not a 'sanctuary for paedophiles'. It further concluded that St Helena has suffered from 'bad management and a lack of strategic organisation'.

There were a number of recommendations made by the Inquiry and St Helena Government drew up a comprehensive work plan to address these. There were only two specific recommendations for Ascension which focussed on the provision of the air link and the supply to the island. The Ascension Island Government chose to take a proactive approach and adopted a work plan of its own that covered a range of improvements that could be made to a number of areas including governance, recruitment, policing and safeguarding.

The FCO appointed an independent FCO official (Ginny Ferson) to oversee these work plans. The Ascension Island Government worked alongside St Helena Government and the FCO to implement these plans. Ginny Ferson's report on the progress made in implementing the Wass Inquiry recommendations can be found on the AIG website.

Feedback from the working group and the FCO found that the Ascension Island Government had put in place many positive actions to address the areas identified for improvement and in many cases had gone beyond the recommendations.

Although the action plan has been completed, the Ascension Island Government will continue to be proactive in reviewing the plan and ensure the good work carried out is continued into the future.

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