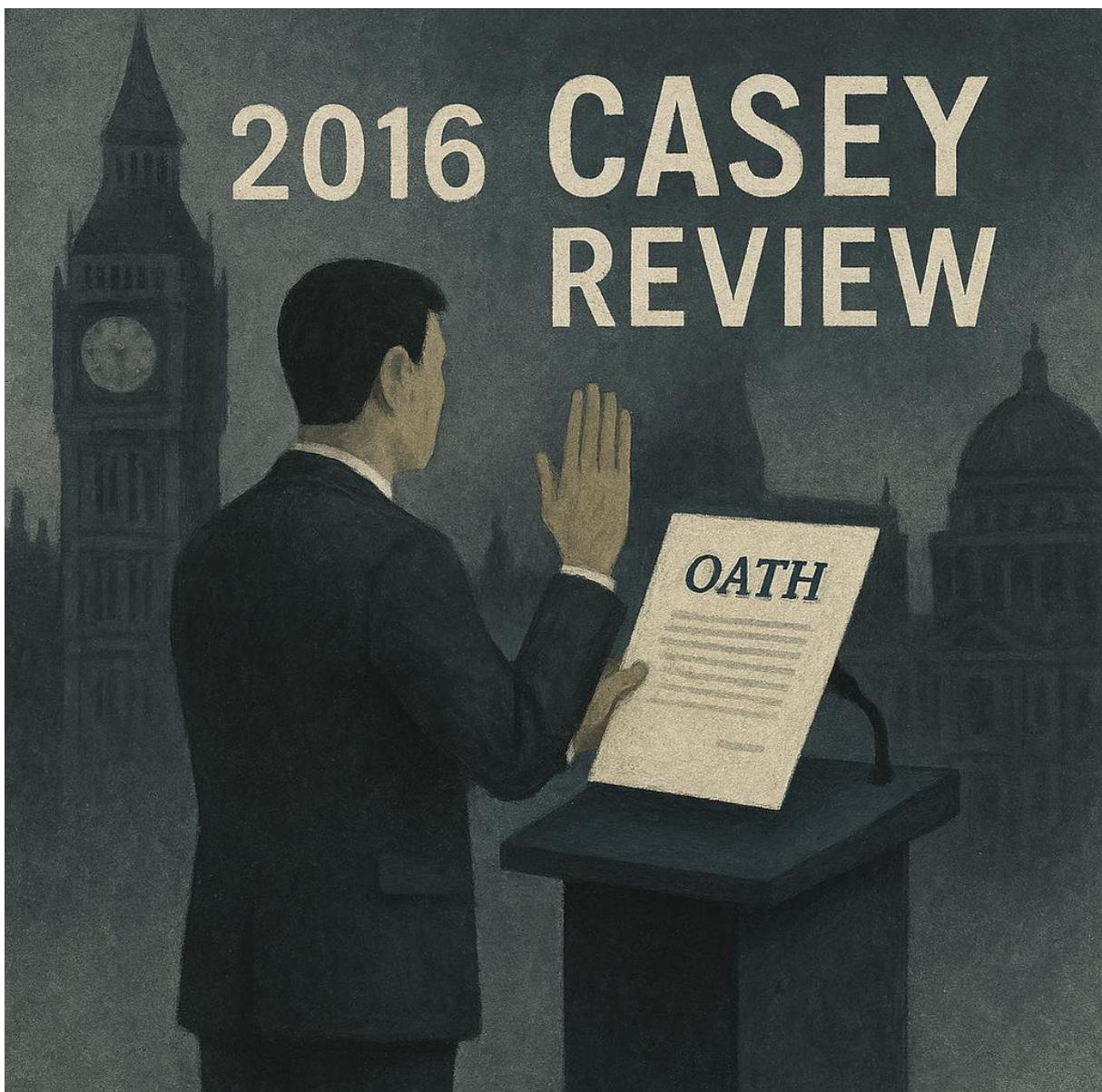


An Oath of Allegiance to a broken system
will legitimise the punishment of
scapegoats whilst the real problems
within public services will remain
unresolved

Adam Tugwell | 19 December 2016



It was perhaps inevitable that with the publication of messages which were supposed to result in a public-wide swift and audible intake of air, [Dame Louise Casey's](#) report on

social cohesion would provoke the Government into making a knee-jerk but nonetheless media-hyped response.

Reviews and Reports of the kind which are commissioned by a government are of course expected to make recommendations. But can we really have confidence that the implications of adopting any policy which logically represents a very narrow and isolated point of view have been considered in the widest context just a couple of weeks after its publication?

Comments from [The Casey Review](#) did indeed resonate with many more people than the Government may realise, purely because it was stating in many ways what many already know to be clearly true. But that doesn't in anyway mean that Dame Louise has the answers to those questions.

We all want to see decisive government action of the kind that we can be sure [Sajid Javid](#) intends this policy to be. But it is not in anyone's interests and least of all his own, for the social injustices which we are now experiencing throughout society, to be compounded by legislation which will legitimise witch hunting and provide a focus for irresponsible leaders to publicly point the finger of blame.

After all, when we make an oath, the mere act of breaking it becomes a verdict of unquestionable guilt. One that for others makes an easy target upon which to attribute much more negative association besides as they draw attention away from their own roles and [lack of] responsibility.

The whole public sector is in a mess, and it desperately needs top to bottom reform initiated in the form that only the Government can provide. However, making anyone associated with delivery itself liable for actions which personally, professionally, culturally and in some cases contrary to social acceptability are outside of their control, is surely a giant step upon a very slippery slope to a dark place indeed.

I am not arguing against taking action in any way. But the suggestion being made by Mr Javid is no better than the discussion initiated by David Cameron following the child abuse scandal in Rotherham in which he suggested that public servants who overlook their safeguarding responsibilities should simply receive jail terms. [I wrote about the issues facing the Sector then](#), and nothing has been improved by the politicians with the real ability to do so in any way since.

If public services operated as effectively as they could, and were underpinned by processes and localised standards of governance which really worked to ensure the very best deal possible for each and every end-user, yes, an Oath by all employed or elected to represent us within would be a fair and appropriate benchmark.

However, they don't work effectively and they are certainly not underpinned with the continuity and levels of service to make it possible for only one person to be branded as being at fault when so many more are always, if not inadvertently involved.

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