

**CHURCH OF IRELAND BOARD FOR SOCIAL ACTION
REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD MAY 2009**

Membership of the Board

Rev Canon GF Anderson	Rev MH Hagan
Rev Canon Dr JPO Barry	Most Rev AET Harper (Chairman)
Mr D Brown	Mrs H Livingston
Mrs J Bunting	Dr J McGaffin (Vice Chairman)
Mrs H Campbell	Very Rev PW Rooke
Mr AD Canning	Mr R Stinson (Hon Secretary)
Dr J Evans	Capt Colin Taylor
Rev MRK Ferry	Very Rev RC Thompson
Mr G Glenn (Hon Treasurer)	Dr J Turner
Mr G Graham	

Staff

Mrs M Giff	Social Worker
Mrs P Gilbert	Senior Social Work Practitioner
Mrs L Graham	Senior Social Work Practitioner
Mrs G McCluskey	Senior Social Work Practitioner
Mr I Slaine	Chief Executive
Mrs M Walker	Administrator

The Staff of the Board for Social Action would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs June Bunting for her help during 2008. Mrs Bunting has been volunteering as a receptionist for the Board and her input is both welcomed and valued.

Objectives for the coming year

The Board for Social Action (NI), along with the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (RI) and the Church in Society Committee, intends to review its roles and objectives, with the intention to bring the bodies together to build on the social work, programmes of social action and social outreach of the Church of Ireland across Ireland.

- To raise awareness of the programme of social action of the Church of Ireland and the newly proposed body.
- To produce a Church of Ireland response to/guide on “The Credit Crunch – Advice/Guidance” in association with other church, voluntary and statutory organisations.
- To seek guidance from Church of Ireland members and other Church of Ireland organisations on potential priorities with regard to the programme of social action.
- To establish Service Level Agreements with Social Services Trusts to allow for increased income and to maintain service provision.
- To carry out a service evaluation amongst users of our Adoption and Fertility Counselling Services.

Summary of Report

- **“A Year of Change”**
Board Membership, Accommodation, Services and Name to that of the Board for Social Action
- **Funding**
A multiplicity of funders and the need for the same to maintain services
- **Adoption Routes**
An overview of services
- **Fertility Counselling Service NI**
An overview of services – demands on staff
- **Financial Support to Families and Individuals in Need**
A breakdown on this service
- **Services to the Adult Deaf, Hearing Impaired and Disabled**
Ongoing service provision and membership of the Disability Committee of the Church of Ireland
- **Child Contact Centres**
End of involvement of the Chief Executive in the Central Belfast Child Contact Centre
- **Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use**
Developing and piloting a training course in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe to be rolled out across Ireland.
- **Inter Church Addiction Project**
A residential and after care unit for young people

Introduction – “A Year of Change”

“A Year of Change” is a way of summing up the life of the Board for Social Action (NI) in 2008. Change can be an opportunity to move on and develop and Board members and staff have used 2008 in this way.

The main changes were:

- January 2008** A move of office to designed-for-purpose accommodation in Heron Road, Belfast
- February 2008** A re-branding of the *Adoption Service* to *Adoption Routes*. The name places adoption to the fore and makes the agency more readily accessible to potential beneficiaries of its services. The adoption agency continues to operate with a Christian ethos.
- March 2008** Re-branding of the *Fertility Counselling Service* to *Fertility Counselling Service(NI)*. This is a reflection of our position as the lead provider of counselling in this specialist area, plus, that the Counselling Service has a Northern Ireland wide remit.
- May 2008** Acceptance of the proposal at the Church of Ireland General Synod that the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility becomes

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the Board for Social Action (NI). This name change recognises that the Church needs to be proactive in the area of social concern and outreach.

November 2008 The opening of dialogue between the Board For Social Action (NI), the Board for Social Responsibility (RI) and the Church in Society Committee on how social outreach can be streamlined and carried out effectively to benefit church members and those outside the church. This process is ongoing and it is hoped to present proposals to the Church of Ireland General Synod in May 2009.

Funding

The Board is involved in a range of social work and social outreach activities. Consequently funding is obtained from a range of sources. It is imperative that the Board maintains funding from existing funders and obtains new funders. Funders include:

- The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
- Health & Social Services Trusts (for services provided.)
- Central Church
- Dioceses
- Parishes
- The Dean of Belfast's Christmas Sit Out Appeal
- BBC Children in Need Appeal
- The Lloyds TSB Foundation
- Donations from Service Users

The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety Core Grant only meets the cost of our Adoption and Fertility Counselling Services. This core funding cannot be used in our social outreach work.

Payments from Health & Social Services Trusts are for professional services provided. Again these cannot be used for other aspects of our work.

Changes in the outside world impact upon the finances of the Board. These include government grants, trusts willing to enter into service level agreements, and parishes having parishioners able to give to our work via donations. Income also needs to be weighed against a change in base with the stand alone costs – some of which were previously shared with other tenants in Church of Ireland House in Belfast.

The economic realities of and the good governance associated with the social work and social outreach of the Board, are always high on the agenda.

Adoption Routes

Adoption Routes is a name which places adoption to the fore and makes clear adoption has a number of routes or points of entry e.g. the desire to adopt. As such, *Adoption Routes* remains involved in a range of adoption activities. These include:

- Pre-adoption counselling
- Recruitment, training and assessment of prospective adopters
- Placement of children for adoption with birth parent consent or by arrangement with the courts following Social Services intervention
- Adoption placement support
- Post adoption services, including access to birth records for adult adoptees
- Independent adoption counselling for birth parents who have had children removed via the court process and are subsequently being placed for adoption
- Adoption assessments on behalf of Social Services
- Membership of statutory adoption panels.

Adoption Routes provides a service which is complementary to and an alternative to that provided by statutory Social Services.

Adoption Routes promotes a service which is non-bureaucratic, user-centred, flexible, innovative and with a Christian ethos as its basis for operation.

The Fertility Counselling Service (NI)

The Fertility Counselling Service (NI) is the lead provider of fertility counselling services across Northern Ireland.

The service is provided from our Belfast base, at the Regional Fertility Centre of the Royal Jubilee Maternity Unit and an office is rented on an 'as required' basis in Cookstown.

The service remains an ongoing challenge from a professional and ethical point of view for the professionally trained counsellors of the *Fertility Counselling Service (NI)*. Counsellors are dealing with people at a point of great emotional need and distress. One in six couples has difficulty in conceiving a child and may seek fertility treatment as a result.

In 2008, the *Fertility Counselling Service (NI)* counselling personnel were instrumental in forming the Irish Fertility Counselling Association. This brings together fertility counsellors from across Ireland and is a source of sharing professional expertise and a source of mutual support.

2008 proved a frustrating year for the *Fertility Counselling Service (NI)* as it attempted to negotiate with its main funder to develop a service level agreement. This process, it is anticipated, will be completed by the 2009/10 financial year, providing additional income and the stability of a three-year contract.

For more information on this service please check our web site www.fertility-counselling.org

Social Outreach

Financial Assistance to Families and Individuals in Need

Although it is a small part of the work of the Board, this service directly benefits many families and individuals. It is a way for a rector/parish to show to a family that the Church cares. In 2008, the amount of £6,585 was paid out in this way. Of this £6,330 went to families with children.

This service is dependent upon funding from the BBC Children in Need, the Church of Ireland Orphans' and Children's Society for Counties Antrim and Down, as well as the use of parish/diocese 'free fund' contributions.

A further expression of the Board's support to families is the Christmas Toy Appeal. The 2008 Appeal, in spite of the looming credit crunch, was the best ever with large numbers of high quality toys being received from parishes across the northern dioceses of the Church. The toys were distributed via a range of bodies including Social Services, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, Women's Aid and Church of Ireland parishes.

Services to the Adult Deaf, Hearing Impaired and Disabled

The Board provides management support and supervision to Rev Canon Dr W Murphy who carries out pastoral duties to the adult deaf and hearing impaired in the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland. This service is funded through investments managed by the Church of Ireland Trustees on behalf of the former Church of Ireland Mission to the Adult Deaf.

Dr Murphy provides pastoral support to a number of individuals affected by deafness from across Northern Ireland. In addition, Dr Murphy provides services to the deaf at the Kinghan Church in Botanic Avenue, Belfast following the closure of the church in Wilton House, Belfast.

The Board is proactively seeking support from the church at a range of levels, towards developing work among the deaf as well as among other people with a disability within (and without) the Church of Ireland.

Dr J McGaffin and Rev Canon Dr W Murphy are members of the Working Group on Disability. The Board's Chief Executive resigned from the committee in 2008 due to other work commitments.

Child Contact Centres

Again, due to work commitments the Board's Chief Executive, with much regret, resigned from the Management Committee of the Central Belfast Child Contact Centre in 2008.

The Board continues to encourage Church of Ireland parishes to develop such centres, with special emphasis on the need for such a centre in the Diocese of Clogher.

Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use

The Board is involved in this area of work in two ways. The first is an internal working group. This group is involved in promoting the Board's strategy for the Church on drug and alcohol use.

This working group is also developing a pilot training course for clergy on problematic drug and alcohol use. This course will be piloted in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe in the first instance. Following this pilot scheme, and refining of the same, based on an evaluation, the course will be made available across all dioceses in Ireland.

The Board is also involved in the Inter Church Addiction Project – see link via the Church of Ireland web site.

The second area of Board involvement in the area of problematic drug and alcohol use is through the Inter Church Addiction Project, which is investigating the potential funding and development of a residential and after-care unit for young people affected by problematic drug and alcohol use.

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Appendix I

Financial Section of Board for Social Action (NI) Report to General Synod May 2009

Revenue Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2008

(being an extract from the latest audited accounts)

	2008		2007	
	£	%	£	%
INCOME				
Donations & Subscriptions				
Dioceses				
Armagh	2,355		1,325	
Clogher	2,500		950	
Connor	4,276		3,310	
Derry and Raphoe	2,145		2,640	
Down and Dromore	5,385		4,615	
	16,661		12,840	
Church of Ireland Priorities Fund	-		6,000	
Dean of Belfast's Christmas Sit Out (Fertility Counselling Work & Adoption Work)	3,000		2,000	
Other Includes anonymous Orphans and Children	2,358		7,806	
RCB Allocations	2,500			
RCB Drugs and Alcohol	40,020			
	10,000		28,646	
	74,539	30.0%	28,646	13.3%
For Services Provided				
Social Work in Fertility Counselling and Adoption Work	77,180		80,244	
Church of Ireland Mission to the Deaf	10,915		13,065	
	88,095	35.4%	93,309	43.2%
Investments and Cash Deposit Funds	3,957	1.6%	8,002	3.7%
Grants From				
Department of Health, Social Services And Public Safety:	82,054	33.0%	70,754	32.8%

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	2008		2007	
	£	%	£	%
INCOME continued				
Charitable Disbursement				
BBC Children in Need	-		11,000	
Protestant Orphan Society (for Counties Antrim & Down)	-		4,000	
			<u>15,000</u>	7.0%
Total Income	<u>£248,645</u>	100%	<u>£215,711</u>	100%
INCOME b/f				
	248,645	100%	215,711	100%
Expenditure				
Operating				
Staff Emoluments	190,306	76.5%	174,907	81.1%
Other Expenses	40,338	16.2%	59,359	27.5%
Accommodation including services	17,622	7.1%	13,742	6.4%
Miscellaneous	745	0.3%	162	0.0%
			<u>248,170</u>	115.0%
Total	249,011	100.1%	248,170	115.0%
Charitable Disbursements	5,498	2.2%	6,702	3.1%
Total Expenditure	<u>£254,509</u>	102.3%	<u>£254,872</u>	118.11%
(DEFICIT) for year	£(5,863)	2.3%	£(39,161)	18.1%

Copies of the statutory accounts along with supporting schedules are available on request at the Board's office.