

APPENDIX I

REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER NI

INTRODUCTION

In March 2006 the RCB approved the positions of Child Protection Officers for NI and RI subject to review by Standing Committee. A CPO NI was appointed in March 2007 with a job role description which included the following strategic and operational roles:

Strategic role

1. Developing and reviewing policy

Operational roles

2. Coordinating and delivering training at all levels
3. Providing professional advice and assessment in relation to the reporting of any child protection issue
4. Monitoring implementation of Safeguarding Trust (SGT)

(A detailed Job Description is found in Appendix 1 of this report).

In June 2009 the Chief Officer requested that the Secretary to the Board of Education NI conduct a review of the role of CPO in order to inform members of Standing Committee on the need for continuation of the position.

Review of operational role – survey

In order to assist with a review of the operational roles, a questionnaire was devised which sought responses from a limited number of individuals who had experienced direct contact with the CPO over the past two years in the above three areas of the role. It was made clear to respondents that the purpose of the questionnaire was to consider the position and not the current post holder.

(The questionnaire is found in Appendix 2 of this report)

Sample

The questionnaire was issued to a small and limited sample of: Bishops, Clergy, Diocesan Secretaries, Parish Panel members and Diocesan Support Team members. In the selection of respondents consideration was given to geographical spread across the 5 dioceses in NI and included clergy and lay members. The total sample number was 22. This was not designed as an exhaustive survey but rather as a capture of the some experiences of the CPO role over the past two years.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

The following is a brief summary of responses under the following four operational aspects of the role:

1. Designing and delivering training

Those who had experienced the training provided by the CPO, rated it as either highly or fully meeting their needs. The SGT training programme for parish panels was rated either good or excellent by all respondents, and the training package for parish workers was rated good or excellent by almost all respondents. Some comments were made stressing the importance of connecting the CPO's role to diocesan and parish worker training and making training more centralised. A suggestion was made for refresher training for workers to be made mandatory.

2. Supporting parishes and dioceses take appropriate action to recognise and respond to concerns about the welfare of children

Most of the sample of respondents had occasion to consult the CPO in this regard over the past two years. All found that the support given fully met their expectation. The need for documented follow-up minutes was emphasised. Many added highly positive comments and spoke of the very professional nature of the service received with many describing it as excellent. There were some comments suggesting a need for more support in the west of the province and for more refresher training for existing panel members.

3. Monitoring implementation of Safeguarding Trust

Regarding evaluation visits to monitor the implementation of SGT, there was a range of responses. Some rated the administration 'good' while others felt it was 'adequate'. The helpfulness of the evaluation visit was most commonly rated as 4 or 5 out of 5. Most felt that the after-visit support provided by the CPO was effective. The response of sampled bishops to the idea of written reports was positive and seemed to favour an annual diocesan report of parishes visited.

4. Other comments by respondents

A number of comments were returned which reflected upon the future role of the CPO. Some noted the crucial nature of this post within the church and expressed the opinion that it must be resourced on an ongoing basis. Many referred to the excellent service provided by the present post-holder. It was suggested that opportunities might be found to make clergy more aware of the role of the CPO. Rural deanery meetings with the CPO were suggested as a possible way of keeping clergy and panels up to date with new developments. Advice on working with vulnerable adults was requested. It was also suggested that the Church develops a positive message around Child Protection stressing its advantages for workers.

CONCLUSION OF RESULTS OF SURVEY

The survey demonstrates that the CPO operational roles have been found to be vital and appear to be meeting needs and expectations to a very high level. The service currently offered has been found to be led in a highly professional manner.

The reaction to the training programme is very positive and suggests that this aspect of the role is indeed strengthening the implementation of SGT in parishes and dioceses. A need has been expressed for increased support for parish worker training in SGT. The CPO is already addressing this by training up a group of local trainers who will be available to deliver the training package in local areas. This might also help mitigate the sense of remoteness felt by some western parishes.

The effectiveness of administration of evaluation visits may require reviewing in the light of comments received. This may in part be caused by the absence of full secretarial support over much of the past year in the Board of Education.

Some parish panels have required the support or advice of the CPO following disclosure or concern of a child protection nature; all commented on the high degree to which that support met their expectation. In the past two years there have been some challenging cases and concerns brought by clergy and panels to the CPO for advice; the high levels of satisfaction noted indicate the value that clergy and panels place on the service provided by the CPO.

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF THE ROLE OF CPO NI

The CPO job description has a strategic role in developing and reviewing policy. These include:

1. To review and develop SGT guidelines in the light of changing legislation and guidance from other agencies.
2. To develop policy and practice and assess risk
3. To liaise with insurer and to advise in relation to the programme
4. To undertake research and further development of child protection issues for central church bodies as appropriate.

The CPO was asked to provide a short summary of her activity over the past two years. Her report is provided as Appendix 3 and includes a report on strategic aspects of the role.

Comments by the Secretary of the Board of Education on the strategic aspects of the role:

- The need to review SGT in the light of changing legislation is vital and ongoing. A most significant development of the policy will be required from 2010 as the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups NI Order is commenced. This will introduce a new **Vetting and Barring Scheme** requiring all who have close contact with children and vulnerable adults to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The Scheme will require adaption of our SGT recruitment procedures, modifying the supporting documentation, training of panel members, and further resourcing of the Access NI administration in the Board offices. Crucially the new legislation will extend current requirements for the church's work with children to include vulnerable adults. The Board is currently conducting a survey of parishes in order to assess demand for the checking services of the Board and the need for training.
- **The management of risk** is another developing area of child protection within which the church will require to gain expertise. A number of rectors have received disclosures from individuals with convictions for sexual offences against children who wish now, following the completion of their sentence, to become part of the worshipping congregation. In order to provide advice to clergy in these circumstances the church needs to develop a policy for working with offenders, with appropriate guidelines. This challenging work will require risk assessment and close working with the PSNI and NI probation service.
- If a case of a serious nature arises where criminal action or Church disciplinary procedures have to be instigated following disclosure of abuse having been committed by a member of the clergy or other church worker, the required reporting to the statutory authorities would necessitate an investigation/facilitation role on behalf of the Church. This would require information gathering and fact-checking as well as liaison with the PSNI, Social Services, AccessNI, CPOs in other jurisdictions, bishops and individuals/families affected by the abuse. This role needs to be clarified and added to the CPO role description as it is not explicitly part of the current role description.'

All of the above additional work will require the Church to be led by a professional child protection officer who will be willing to become skilled in new and developing areas of child protection and working with vulnerable adults. Some of the strategic roles of the CPO will overlap with aspects of role of the Secretary of the Board. The Secretary will continue to have a responsibility for overseeing the work of the CPO and providing a strategic direction to the work of the Board.

CONCLUSION OF REVIEW

In 2006 the role of Child Protection Officer was new and untried. After three years the role has developed and become embedded as a service within the church. Its importance has been shown by this small survey, to be absolutely vital. It would be unthinkable now not to have such a support for bishops, clergy and parish panels, particularly given the high profile that child protection has within public life and in the media. The Church of Ireland must by reason of its calling and public responsibility offer the highest standard of care for all the children within its ministry – child protection must be one of our top priorities. It is imperative that this post of CPO is continued with some adjustment to current roles made on the basis of the above discussion.

A further important aspect of the role of CPO is to present a challenge function to the church – many churches in the past have been found not to have dealt with child protection concerns with the paramountcy of the welfare of the child as a first principle. A professional social worker leading this work brings objectivity and enables the Church to be much more accountable for the standards of care provided in our parishes.

This review has highlighted a number of areas where the CPO role may need developed, these include:

- risk assessment of offenders in church;
- new roles arising from advancing legislation, eg Safeguarding Vulnerable adults and the Vetting and Barring Scheme;
- an investigative / facilitation role for cases of a serious nature;
- further development of training programmes for panels and workers.

The review also highlights the need to address administrative resources to meet the demands of supporting these new areas of work within the office of the Board of Education.

APPENDIX 1

CPO NI Job Description

Strategic Roles

1. Developing and reviewing policy

- To review and develop the *Safeguarding Trust* guidelines, subject to the approval of the Standing Committee of the General Synod, in the light of changing legislation and guidance from other agencies
- To develop policy and practice to assess and manage risk
- To liaise with insurers and to advise in relation to the programme
- To undertake research and further development of child protection issues for central church bodies as appropriate

Operational Roles

1. Designing and delivering training

- To coordinate and/or deliver training to clergy and parish panel members in *Safeguarding Trust*
- To assist clergy and parish panels to understand and implement the *Safeguarding Trust* guidelines
- To coordinate the training of the Diocesan Support teams or trainers and further develop their training and evaluation roles.
- To develop child protection support within each diocese

2. Supporting parishes and dioceses taking appropriate action to recognise and respond to concerns about the welfare of children

- To advise rectors and panel members on child protection queries
- To advise bishops on child protection matters within their dioceses
- To ensure appropriate supports are in place for rectors / panel members during and following a child protection enquiry
- To keep a record of concerns reported by bishops / rectors / panel members

3. Monitoring implementation of the code

- To oversee the programme of parish *Safeguarding Trust* evaluations
- To monitor the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust* in parishes and assist bishops and diocesan councils review implementation

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4. Forging links with statutory organisations and other bodies

- To develop links with Social Services, Police, Probation Service and others in the Health and Voluntary sector
- To liaise with the child protection officers of other churches
- To liaise with the Volunteer Development Agency and the DHSS&PS
- To help prepare for the possibility of accreditation

5. Providing reports for the Board of Education (NI)

- To present *Safeguarding Trust* progress reports to the Board of Education (NI)
- To devise and maintain an annual budget for *Safeguarding Trust* functions to the Board of Education (NI)

APPENDIX 2

BOARD OF EDUCATION NI

REVIEW OF THE POSITION OF CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER FOR NI (CPO NI)

Questionnaire issued to limited sample of: Bishops, Clergy, Diocesan Secretaries, Parish Panel members and Diocesan Support Team members.

INTRODUCTION

In March 2006 the RCB approved the positions of Child Protection Officers for NI and RI subject to review by Standing Committee. The review of the CPO NI is due in November 2009 and this questionnaire is being circulated to a sample of: Bishops, Clergy, Diocesan Secretaries, Parish Panel members and Diocesan Support Team members to help evaluate the role.

Please note that **the purpose of this questionnaire is to consider the position** and not the current post-holder – this will be undertaken internally by the RCB as employer. It may be that the future role needs to be modified in the light of responses and we therefore value your thoughts about this important resource for the church.

Designing and delivering training

1. Have you experienced any training delivered by the Board of Education NI since March 2007?
Yes / No [If you answered ‘No’, please move on to question 5.]
2. How much did the training meet your needs? [1=less than fully , 5 fully]
1 2 3 4 5
3. How would you describe the design of the Safeguarding Trust training programme for Parish Panels? (Please circle as appropriate)
 inadequate adequate satisfactory good excellent
4. How would you describe the effectiveness of the training package provided for parish workers?
 inadequate adequate satisfactory good excellent
5. Thinking broadly about training needs, which aspects of training require to be developed in your view?

Supporting parishes and dioceses take appropriate action to recognise and respond to concerns about the welfare of children

6. How often have you required the advice / support of the Child Protection Officer (CPO) in the past two years?

Never once, twice, more than twice
(Please circle as appropriate)

[If you answered 'Never' please move on to question 8]

7. How much did that support meet your expectation? [1=less than fully , 5 fully]

1 2 3 4 5

8. Have you any views on how the child protection support service could be improved?

Monitoring implementation of Safeguarding Trust

[Questions 9-12 for Clergy and Parish Panel members only]

If your parish received an evaluation visit by one of the diocesan support teams in the last two years please answer the following questions. [If you received no visit please move on to question 12]

9. How would you describe the administration of that visit?

inadequate adequate satisfactory good excellent

10. How would you describe the helpfulness of that visit? [1=not very, 5 = very helpful]

1 2 3 4 5

11. Did you find that there was effective support during and after the visit to enable you to implement Safeguarding Trust in your parish? Yes/ No

12. Have you any comments to make about how the Board of Education can help you implement Safeguarding Trust better?

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[Questions 13-14 for Bishops only]

13. Would you like to receive written reports from the CPO following evaluation visits, assessing the implementation of Safeguarding Trust in parishes your diocese? Yes / No

14. If you answered 'Yes' to question 13, how frequently would you like reports provided for you? (Please circle)

termly annually on a needs basis

And finally,

15. In your view, is there any additional role required of the CPO in future to enhance implementation of Safeguarding Trust in your parish / diocese?

16. Have you any further comment to make which may be of assistance in reshaping the role of the CPO or reviewing the priorities of the tasks assigned to the role?

APPENDIX 3

Summary report of the work of CPONI Since May 2008

1. Developing and reviewing policy

- May – June 2008 Introduction of 2008 edition of Safeguarding Trust manual
- Series of (2) information events in each diocese and distribution of new Safeguarding Trust manuals
- Preparation for introduction of Vetting and Barring Scheme in 2010 – changes to legal definitions and legislative requirements
- Consideration of the need for policy in relation to vulnerable adults to comply with changing legislation
- Working to develop policy in relation to sex offenders in church

2. Designing and delivering training

- Designing new Safeguarding Trust training programmes
- Training of new ordinands and incumbents annually
- Training of Theological Institute students annually
- Implementation of new two-part model of training for panel members
- Training of parish panel members – 10 training sessions with approximately 25 panel members per session
- Training of parish workers – 10 training sessions with 25 – 30 workers per session
- Training of workers in mission agencies – 3 training sessions
- Training of Jump interns
- Advising rectors, panel members, workers and various groups on all aspects of Safeguarding Trust and its implementation
- Providing an annual training event for Diocesan Support Team members
- Recruitment and training of local Safeguarding Trust trainers

3. Supporting parishes and dioceses taking appropriate action to recognise and respond to concerns about the welfare of children

- Advising rectors, panel members and workers on child protection issues
- Advising bishops on child protection issues
- Offering support/advice/guidance to bishops/rectors/panel members during and following child protection enquiries
- Maintaining records of reported concerns

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- 4. Monitoring implementation of the code**
 - Preparing the annual evaluation lists – 70 parishes evaluated 2008-9
 - Advising rectors of the evaluation visit and process of evaluation
 - Liaising with the diocesan support team members (25)
 - Reviewing evaluation reports, responding to the parishes and providing support/information/advice where required
 - Advising diocesan secretaries and bishops of issues relating to implementation

- 5. Forging links with statutory organisations and other bodies**
 - Developing and maintaining close links and working relationships with Social Services, NSPCC, PSNI, Probation Service, AccessNI and other statutory, voluntary and community organisations
 - Founding member of inter church child protection group
 - Maintaining contact and liaising with the Volunteer Development Agency
 - Maintaining status as Keeping Safe trainer – partnership between VDA and Belfast Trust