

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

**BOARD FOR SOCIAL ACTION
REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2010**

Membership of the Board

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Rev Canon GF Anderson (deceased March 09) | Rev MH Hagan (resigned March 09) |
| Rev Canon Dr JPO Barry | Most Rev AET Harper (Chairman) |
| Mr D Brown | Mrs H Livingston |
| Mrs J Bunting | Rev Dr J McGaffin (Vice Chairman) |
| Mrs H Campbell | Rev J Muir (appointed June 09) |
| Mr AD Canning | Very Rev PW Rooke |
| Dr J Evans | Mr R Stinson (Honorary Secretary) |
| Rev MRK Ferry | Captain C Taylor |
| Mr G Glenn (Honorary Treasurer) | Very Rev RC Thompson |
| Mr G Graham | Dr J Turner |

The Board noted with great sadness the death of Rev Canon GF Anderson. Gordon had been involved in Church Welfare Services for many years.

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 time and commitment provided by all Board members is to be commended. The involvement of Mrs June Bunting, a Board member, as a volunteer receptionist, remains of value to staff, service users and the Board.

Objectives for the coming year

- Build on proposals set out by both the interim and appointed Social Theology in Action Committee.
- Review Strategic Planning Processes based on the outcome of the proposals of the Social Theology in Action Committee – and the impact of stakeholders and partners outside the Church of Ireland.
- Build on existing services – Next Step and Fertility Counselling Service NI.
- To carry out an evaluation of the Fertility Counselling Service NI.
- To continue to attract funding from various sources within and outside the Church of Ireland.
- To examine ways to maximise the use of the premises in Heron Road.
- To review opportunities for new areas of work.

Summary of Report

- Change, including the impact of restructuring within the Church of Ireland and the outside world – economics/trusts/and social need
- Funding – a range of funders with associated audit processes

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

Adoption Routes

- Successful tender for a new service for Birth Relative Counselling and Support Services – Next Step – A partnership with another Adoption Agency
- Impact of funding issues with Trusts
- Mismatch between children available and wishes of adopters

Fertility Counselling Service NI

- The lead provider of Fertility Counselling in Northern Ireland
- Moral and ethical challenges
- Training for other professionals
- Involvement in the British Infertility Counselling Association and the Irish Infertility Counsellors' Association

Financial Assistance to Families and Individuals in Need

- Financial support to families and individuals in need via referral from Clergy and other sources
- An increase in the level of uptake following a mailshot to Clergy in September 2009

Problematic Alcohol and Drug Use

- Training course for Clergy
- Involvement in the Inter Church Addiction Project

Services to Adult Deaf, Hearing Impaired and Disabled

- Ongoing support to a pastor to the Adult Deaf
- Encouraging developments in the Church of Ireland in respect of Disability issues

Conclusion

- A need for a strategic review based on changes in Church of Ireland structures on Social Action, plus, the impact of Trusts/the outside world

Introduction

The Board continues to operate in a period of significant and ongoing change. This includes outside factors including Government Policies/Funding and the Church reviewing its own structures and operations.

The Future of the Board

In 2009 the General Synod of the Church of Ireland agreed to a restructuring proposal for the Board for Social Action, the Board for Social Responsibility (RI) and the Church in Society Committee.

The Social Theology in Action Committee was set up to take forward the restructuring proposal as stated in Appendix 3 of the Book of Reports of General Synod 2009.

The Church of Ireland Board for Social Action was fully involved in the discussions of the committee through the membership of Judith McGaffin, Bob Stinson and Ian Slaine.

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

This Board fully commends and endorses the proposals of the committee as presented in a separate section in the Book of Reports to General Synod 2010.

The intention, should this proposal be accepted by General Synod, is for the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (N.I.) to remain in operation as a provider of social work/counselling/social outreach services. The Board will operate with a more streamlined management structure, the intention being to recruit new members with relevant skills in addition to existing members of the General Purpose and Finance Committee.

In addition the Board for Social Responsibility (N.I.) will require to open negotiations with the Church of Ireland Board for Social Theology in Action, the Representative Church Body and Standing Committee on future liaisons and working relationships.

Funding

The Board, as a provider of services, is involved in a range of counselling/social work/social care activities. As a result, the Board is dependent upon funding from a range of sources.

Receiving funding also leads to an audit process which while time consuming is a valuable means of ensuring our services are clearly costed and financially controlled.

It is imperative that the Board maintains funding and obtains new sources of funding. In the current economic climate in which public agencies prefer 'in-house' to purchasing services from outside agencies, there is a need for the Board to reflect on its future direction and be aware of the means of being cost effective and value for money.

The main funders of the Board include:

- The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety – Core Grant towards delivery of Adoption and Fertility Counselling Services
- Belfast Health & Social Services Trust – under a Service Level Agreement – delivery of Fertility Counselling Services
- Health & Social Care Trusts – for services provided on a 'spot purchase' basis for Social Work Services
- Local Authorities in England – for services provided on a 'spot purchase' basis for Social Work Services
- The Health & Social Care Board – under a Service Level Agreement – delivery of Next Step/Independent Birth Relative Counselling and Support Services
- Representative Church Body – financial support for accommodation, and for projects, e.g. Problematic Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- Dioceses – towards core services, and social outreach, and support to families in need
- Parishes – towards core services, and social outreach, and support to families in Need
- BBC Children in Need – to support families in need
- The Dean of Belfast's Christmas Sit Out Appeal – to support the Families in Need Service Delivery and Adoption Routes Service Delivery
- The Enkalon Foundation – to support Adoption Routes Service Delivery
- Merck Serono – to support Fertility Counselling Service ni Service Delivery
- Donations from Service Users – to support Service Delivery

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety Core Grant is towards our Adoption and Fertility Counselling Services only. The Core Grant cannot be used for other aspects of the work of the Board.

Service Level Agreement income, and that for spot purchase, relates only to specific service for which it is contracted.

Economic realities and good governance remain high on the Board's agenda.

Adoption Routes

Adoption was the original core activity of the Board. Other services, including *Fertility Counselling Service (NI)*, developed out of our adoption service.

In 2009 *Adoption Routes* tendered, in an open and competitive tendering process, for a new service in Northern Ireland. The service is aimed at birth relatives, parents, grandparents, siblings who have had children removed via court action for adoption. The birth relatives, it has been recognised, require independent counselling and support to assist them with the impact of the adoption of a child or children.

The tendering body, the Health and Social Care Board, decided to offer *Adoption Routes* the lead in providing the service, and it has asked Family Care Society, another locally based adoption agency, to provide an input into the service provision. The new service is to be called *Next Step*. The name represents a level of independence from the adoption process and adoption agencies, plus, it shows users they have an opportunity to 'move on' in their feelings, but not necessarily move forward.

The contract is initially for a three-year period with an opportunity for re-tendering. The official launch of the service with appropriate publicity is planned for June 2010.

The success of *Adoption Routes* in this process may be viewed positively as recognition of our professional and quality-based social work practice and counselling services.

Adoption Routes continues to remain involved in a range of adoption activities including:

- Placement of children for adoption
- Training and assessment of prospective adopters
- Support to adopters in relation to the needs of their child/children
- Post adoption support, including access to birth records
- Membership of a Statutory Adoption Panel

The concept of adoption has changed significantly in recent years. The children placed are rarely babies with consent. Instead the children tend to come from the 'care system'. This means the children tend to be older (four/five years of age) with backgrounds which may include physical/emotional/sexual abuse. This means statistics associated with adoption placements do not represent the actual workload. An adoption involves preparation and assessment of prospective parents, support to the child, support once the order has been granted and through to a child reaching adulthood.

Also, it should be noted following preparation and a significant input from *Adoption Routes* personnel, some applicants decide to withdraw from the adoption process. The applicants often decide the children available for adoption do not meet their criteria or

expectations. A mismatch exists between what adopters have to offer and the needs of the children available.

Into this mix add finance. Health & Social Care Trusts, unlike their counterparts in England, are reluctant to use the voluntary agencies prospective adopters due to the Inter-Agency fee charged. Hence, our prospective adopters wait for a placement as children remain in the care system.

This financial situation is likely to worsen in future years with a potential impact on services. This is something the Board will reflect on in 2010 as part of its strategic planning process.

Provision of Post Adoption Support, including access to records of the Church of Ireland Adoption Society and Homes such as Hopedene Hostel, remains a key area of work for social work personnel.

Fertility Counselling Service NI

Fertility Counselling Service (NI) remains the lead provider of fertility counselling services in Northern Ireland.

The Counselling is provided from our own office base with dedicated counselling rooms, as well as, at the Regional Fertility Centre, Belfast, and a counselling room in Cookstown. *Fertility Counselling Service (NI)* is actively pursuing a North West office base for 2010.

This service remains one which faces, often on a daily basis, new professional and ethical dilemmas. The counsellors are dealing with individuals and couples at a point of great emotional need and distress. One in six couples has difficulty in conceiving a child and may go on to seek fertility treatment. *The Fertility Counselling Service (NI)* is there to provide support.

In 2009 a total of 214 new referrals were received for counselling. Add to this the ongoing work with over one hundred service users and it is obvious to see the need is great. Although most of our service users are from Northern Ireland we have also provided counselling to a significant number of users resident in the Republic of Ireland.

Fertility Counselling Service (NI) remains an active member of the British Infertility Counselling Association and the Irish Infertility Counsellors' Association. Indeed Mrs Gerry McCluskey is now on the Executive Committee and Mrs Patricia Gilbert on the National Accreditation Board of the British Infertility Counselling Association.

In 2009 *Fertility Counselling Service (NI)* provided training on fertility issues and an introduction to fertility counselling to Social Workers from Belfast and South Eastern Health & Social Care Trusts and provided a half day input into a joint BICA/IFCA training event. Further training in 2010 is to be offered to Regional Fertility Centre nurses and administrative personnel and to social workers from voluntary adoption agencies across Great Britain. The training promotes the service, plus, is a source of income.

Fertility Counselling Service (NI) maintains close links with Infertility Network UK, a support group for people affected by infertility.

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

In 2009, Patricia Gilbert achieved full membership of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy as an accredited counsellor. The Board recognises this achievement.

Social Outreach

Financial Assistance to Families and Individuals in Need

In terms of time spent, this is a small part of the work of the Board, although it should be noted that significant levels of audit and control are required to provide this service.

Financial support to families and individuals in need via Church of Ireland Clergy is a significant way of showing a caring Church.

In September 2009, all Church of Ireland clergy in Northern Ireland received a mail shot on this service including criteria for service users. This led to an immediate increase in the level of uptake. This unfortunately soon dipped again. Clergy are encouraged to make use of the funds available.

This service is dependent upon support from BBC Children in Need and the Dean of Belfast's Christmas Sit Out Appeal, plus, Parish/Diocese unrestricted giving.

In 2009, the amount of £11,300 was paid to families and individuals in need. Of this amount £10,275 was spent on families with children.

A further expression of the Board's support to families is the Christmas Toy Appeal. The 2009 Appeal was the most successful to date. High quality toys, as well as items suitable for older children, were contributed by Parishes across Northern Ireland, from Enniskillen to Carrickfergus and Saintfield to the Shankill, Belfast.

The toys were distributed via a range of methods to families in need. This included Parishes in Belfast, Social Services, Probation Service and Women's Aid.

Services to the Adult Deaf, Hearing Impaired and Disabled

The Board provides management support and supervision to the Rev Dr Canon W Murphy as he carries out pastoral duties to the adult deaf and hearing impaired in the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland. The service is funded through investments from the now defunct Church of Ireland Mission to the Adult Deaf and is administered by the Church of Ireland Trustees.

Dr Will Murphy carries out his clerical duties at the Kinghan Church in Belfast. This church is operated by the Presbyterian Board of Social Witness. The Board for Social Responsibility (NI) is in negotiations with the Presbyterian Board of Social Witness as to how to further and build on the current arrangement.

In addition, the Board made a proposal in 2009 to Central Church via the Working Group on Disability of the Church of Ireland, on developing services for people with hearing impairment and other disabilities within the Church of Ireland.

The Board remains an active member of the Working Group on Disability through the membership of Dr Judith McGaffin and Dr Will Murphy.

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use

The Board operates an internal working group on problematic drug and alcohol use. This group developed a pilot course for clergy on these issues and the course was run at a Derry and Raphoe Diocesan event in 2009.

The course is being externally evaluated at present and once this is complete the plan is to run the same course for all dioceses across Ireland.

The Board remains actively involved in the Inter Church Addiction Project (ICAP). ICAP aims to develop a regional residential unit for young people whose drug and alcohol use is problematic. The issue for ICAP going further appears to be a lack of access to significant levels of statutory funding.

Conclusion

Based on the restructuring of social action within the Church of Ireland and with the impact of the outside world in relation to purchasing of services and the services required based on social need, the Board recognises a need to review and build on its strategic planning process.

The Board has decided to progress the issue of strategic planning with an independently facilitated event to be held in mid 2010. This process will involve Board members, staff, church representatives and a range of stakeholders.

As a relatively small voluntary agency we feel well equipped and flexible enough to build on existing services, adapt existing services, close a service if need be and move on to develop other services.

Statistics

| | 2009 | 2008 |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Adoption Orders Granted: | 2 | 1 |
| Children Placed with Prospective Adopters: | 1 | 2 |
| Post Adoption Enquiries: | 71 | 54 |
| Independent Birth Relative Counselling Referrals: | 64 | 11 |
| Fertility Counselling Service in Referrals: | 214 | 214 |
| Financial Support to Families and Individuals In Need: | £11,300 | £6,330 |
| Adoption Enquiries: | 47 | 49 |

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

Appendix I

Financial Section of Board for Social Responsibility (NI) Report to General Synod May 2010

Revenue Statement for Year Ended 31 March 2009
(being an extract from the latest audited accounts)

| | 2009 | | 2008 | |
|--|----------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | £ | % | £ | % |
| INCOME | | | | |
| Donations & Subscriptions | | | | |
| Dioceses | | | | |
| Armagh | 3,125 | | 2,355 | |
| Clogher | 1,775 | | 2,500 | |
| Connor | 4,985 | | 4,276 | |
| Derry and Raphoe | 2,980 | | 2,145 | |
| Down and Dromore | 4,704 | | 5,385 | |
| | <u>17,569</u> | | <u>16,661</u> | |
| Dean of Belfast's Christmas Sit Out (Fertility Counselling Work & Adoption Work) | 3,000 | | 3,000 | |
| Other Includes anonymous | 497 | | 2,385 | |
| Orphans and Children | 1,000 | | 2,500 | |
| RCB Accommodation Grant | 10,000 | | 40,020 | |
| RCB Drugs and Alcohol | 10,000 | | 10,000 | |
| Enkalon Foundation | 2,000 | | - | |
| Lloyds TSB | 2,750 | | | |
| | <u>29,247</u> | 16.6% | <u>74,539</u> | 30.0% |
| Services Provided | | | | |
| Social Work in Fertility Counselling and Adoption Work | 121,758 | | 77,180 | |
| Church of Ireland Mission to the Deaf | 17,226 | | 10,915 | |
| Grants for Adoption Services | 8,842 | | - | |
| | <u>147,826</u> | 52.5% | <u>88,095</u> | 35.4% |
| Investments and Cash Deposit Funds | 2,899 | 1.0% | 3,957 | 1.6% |
| Grants From Department of Health, Social Services And Public Safety: | 74,268 | 26.4% | 82,054 | 33.0% |

Board for Social Action (NI) – Report 2010

| | 2009 | | 2008 | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | £ | % | £ | % |
| INCOME continued | | | | |
| Charitable Disbursement | | | | |
| BBC Children in Need | 10,000 | 3.5% | - | |
| Total Income | <u>£281,809</u> | 100% | <u>£248,645</u> | 100% |
| INCOME b/f | | | | |
| | 2009 | | 2008 | |
| | £ | % | £ | % |
| | 281,809 | 100% | 248,646 | 100% |
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Operating | | | | |
| Staff Emoluments | 187,382 | 66.5% | 190,306 | 76.5% |
| Other Expenses | 75,635 | 27.1% | 40,338 | 16.2% |
| Accommodation including services | 18,944 | 6.5% | 17,622 | 7.1% |
| Miscellaneous | 596 | 0.2% | 745 | 0.3% |
| | ----- | | ----- | |
| Total | 282,557 | 100.3% | 249,011 | 100.1% |
| Charitable Disbursements | 7,551 | 2.6% | 5,498 | 2.2% |
| Total Expenditure | <u>£290,108</u> | 102.9% | <u>£254,509</u> | 102.3% |
| (DEFICIT) for year | £(8,299) | 2.9% | £(5,863) | 2.3% |

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