

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007
BOARD FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (NI)
REPORT 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report to The Church of Ireland General Synod May 2007

Board Membership

Resignations
New members required

Review of Organisation

Restructuring required and a “Thinking Day” held.

Accommodation

The search for accommodation which is accessible to users and in a neutral area has proved to be a demanding process.

Funding

A multiplicity of funders. Building on a relationship with the Central Church.

The Church of Ireland Adoption Society

Ongoing development of adoption as a service for older children. Learning from disruptions. Inspection of the Society by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The Society provided a formal response to consultation on Adoption Legislation.

Fertility Counselling Service

Ongoing demand for the service is high.

New Relationship with Origin Fertility Care, Belfast

There is a need to obtain additional work linked to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety’s announcement of additional monies for Fertility Counselling Services.

Social Concern

Financial Assistance to Families in Need

Direct financial assistance supported by the BBC Children in Need and the Church of Ireland Orphan and Children’s Society.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

Services to Deaf and Hearing Impaired and Disabled

Networking with and developing links with Church of England and the Republic of Ireland. Involvement in a Church Working Group on Disability.

Child Contact Centres

Involvement in the Central Belfast Contact Centre and the Northern Ireland Network of Contact Centres by the Board's Chief Executive.

Alcohol and Drug Misuse

This sub-committee of the Board has produced *Christian Action on Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use 2005-2008*. Inter Church Addiction Project.

There have been presentations to the General Synod, The House of Bishops, Derry and Raphoe Synod and Down and Dromore Clergy Conference.

Benefits Leaflet

This is a new Board development effected by resource issues.

Guide for Faith Communities on Domestic Violence

The Board provided an input into the production of a Guide on Domestic Violence for Faith Communities.

REPORT

The Board for Social Responsibility (N.I.) members are made up of laity and clergy from across the Northern dioceses of the Church of Ireland. Some members represent a constituent organisation. Other members are co-opted based on grounds of their professional expertise, having a specific skill base, or due to personal experience.

The Board aims to provide “*A practical response to the Church's Ministry to the community by providing a social work service, by raising awareness of social issues and by offering help to clergy and parishes as required in dealing with their community outreach.*”

In addition to Board members who all provide of their time on a voluntary basis the organisation employs social work and administrative personnel to carry out its role as a provider of a range of social work services. The Board's Chief Executive and administrative personnel are involved in both the social work and social concern activities of the Board.

Membership of the Board

Revd Canon GF Anderson
Revd Dr JPO Barry
Mr David Brown

Most Revd AET Harper (Chairman)
Mrs H Livingstone (Appointed Sept 06)
Dr J McGaffin

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

Mrs J Bunting	
Mrs H Campbell (Appointed June 06)	Revd J Pickering
Mr AD Canning	Mr GS Shaw (Resigned Sept 06)
Dr J Evans	Mr R Stinson (Hon Secretary)
Revd MRK Ferry	Very Revd RC Thompson
Mr G Glenn (Hon Treasurer)	Capt Colin Taylor (Appointed June 06)
Mr G Graham	Dr J Turner

In 2006 the Board welcomed Mrs Hilary Campbell as a Mothers' Union representative and Captain Colin Taylor as a representative of the Church Army.

In 2006 the Board, through resignation and/or retirement, lost the services and commitment of Mr G Sherman Shaw, a co-opted member of the Board and for a number of years the Honorary Treasurer, and Mrs Emma Gould, a Representative of the Mothers' Union.

The Board remains short of representatives from the dioceses of Armagh and Clogher.

In December 2006 Col Barney Filor, a long-serving Board member, died following a period of ill-health. Barney served on the Board for many years and was vice chair for a period of time as well as being a convenor of a number of Sub-Committees.

Staff

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

Review of Organisation

In the 2005 Report to Synod, the Board presented a need for an organisational and structural overhaul. This process commenced in late December 2006 with a "Thinking Day" facilitated by Dr J McGaffin, a Board member, and involving members of the General Purpose and Finance Committee and Board staff.

The full report from the "Thinking Day" will be available on the Board website when reviewed in March 2007 by the full Board.

The report is the basis for future positive changes for the Board which, it is anticipated, will bring benefits to the Church of Ireland as a whole.

Accommodation

The search for accommodation during 2006 proved an arduous and fruitless task.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

The Chief Executive consulted with other Church-linked bodies that were also leaving Church of Ireland House in Belfast, in an attempt to have shared social outreach associated accommodation. In late December 2006 the plans for a shared building unexpectedly fell through with regard to Board involvement. This led to the Board having to start the process of searching once again.

Obtaining accommodation accessible to users, in a neutral area and at a reasonable price (purchase or rental) has proved frustrating and difficult. In addition this period of uncertainty has proved unsettling for staff.

Funding

The Board is dependent upon funding from a range of sources. These included the Church, at a central, parish and diocesan level; the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety; Social Services; Trusts; the Regional Fertility Centre and Voluntary Trust Funds.

In 2006 the Board opened formal negotiations with the Budget Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee in an attempt to improve the level of centrally provided Church funding. These negotiations are ongoing.

The Board has a contract with The Regional Fertility, The Royal Maternity Hospital, Belfast, and this has proved a valuable income source. Developing contracts with Social Services Trusts has proved more difficult. Service Level Agreements have tended to be less used than a Spot Purchase Arrangement.

The Core Grant from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is of value in supporting the work of the Adoption and Fertility Counselling Services.

Social Work/Social Care Services

The Church of Ireland Adoption Society

The work of the Society remains the principal social work activity of the Board.

The message remains clear that consent to adoption of a baby by a mother with an unplanned pregnancy is now a rare occurrence. In 2006 the Society received referrals from five women with an unplanned pregnancy. The Society is increasingly involved in the placement of older children aged three years plus, from the care system with the co-operation of Social Services. The placement of older children brings with it inherent risks for the adopters and the children.

Due to the needs of the children the Society places a greater emphasis on the preparation and training of prospective adopters.

In 2006 the Society provided two Information Evenings and a total of twenty-two people attended.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

The Society has also set in train the planning of a four-day training course for prospective adopters. The planning came to fruition in late December 2006. Due to the low number of adoption applicants no training course was held in 2006.

The number of persons enquiring to adopt remains high at 95 in the period concerned. This number tapers off as persons making enquiries are advised that few, if any, babies are now available for adoption.

In late 2006 a child was placed with Society-approved prospective adopters by an agency outside Northern Ireland.

In 2006 placement disruptions occurred in two placements with Society-approved adopters. This experience proved traumatic for the children, adopters, and agency staff. Our aim is to learn from the disruptions and ensure the issues that caused the disruption are considered fully for future placements of children.

The Post Adoption Service remains a significant part of the work of the agency. This service is provided to adult adoptees, adopters and birth relatives of persons placed for adoption. In 2006 a total of seventy-seven enquiries were received for this service.

The Independent Adoption Counselling Service – see the leaflet on the Church of Ireland web site and the link to BSR – is aimed at providing support to birth parents who are having children placed for adoption by Social Services and without consent. In 2006 a total of eleven referrals were received for this service.

The Society places a great deal of emphasis on training social work and Adoption Panel members. In 2006 courses for social work staff and Panel members included:

- ‘Applicants Attending Panel’, provided by Mr A Johnstone, an Independent Social Work Trainer
- ‘Adoption Issues’, provided by Adoption Matters, Chester, a course focusing on the needs of children placed for adoption, and how to evidence adopters’ knowledge and skills

In 2006 Mrs Lynda Graham, Social Worker completed the Diploma in Person Centred Counselling with High Commendation at Queens University, Belfast, and commenced the final part of her Post Qualifying Award course.

The Society continues to provide representation on one of the Adoption Panels in the Eastern Health & Social Services Board area, the Northern Ireland Adoption Forum and the Diocesan Adoption Agencies Group.

In late 2007 Dr H Harrison of the Social Services Inspectorate of the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety commenced a statutory inspection of the Society. The Adoption Society welcomes an opportunity to learn from the outside inspection and guidance from the Department.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

In 2006 the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety consulted on proposed adoption legislation in Northern Ireland. The Board organised consultation events on the legislation involving Board and Adoption Panel members, staff and Service Users. A formal response to the legislation was forwarded to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. A copy of the responses made by the Board is available through the Church of Ireland web site.

The Fertility Counselling Service

This service has continued to grow over recent years. Demand for the service remains high. This however, is to be expected on realising that one in six couples experience difficulty in conceiving a child.

For more information on the Fertility Counselling Service please view our web site on www.fertility-counsellingni.org

The Fertility Counselling Service has two main funding streams – The Regional Fertility Centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, for patients attending that unit and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for persons attending their General Practitioner or a local hospital for initial investigations.

In respect of the two funding streams a total of two hundred and fourteen new referrals were received in 2006. This figure does not include ongoing fertility counselling cases.

The Fertility Counselling Service remains a demanding and challenging area for the Board and its Social Work/Counselling staff. There is recognition of the moral and ethical dilemmas presented in particular cases, but also an acceptance that the service is provided to persons at a time of great need.

In mid-2006 the Fertility Counselling Service started to provide, on a fee paid basis, a service to Origin Fertility Care. Origin Fertility Care is a private Fertility Clinic operating in Belfast.

The Fertility Counselling Service places an emphasis on training staff in counselling. In 2006 Mrs P Gilbert completed a Diploma HE in Counselling with a Commendation. Mrs G McCluskey attended the Certificate in Person-Centred Counselling Course at Queen's University, Belfast and completed the same.

The Fertility Counselling Service remains in close contact with the British Infertility Counselling Association, Infertility Network UK and the support groups, Tiny Feet and STORK. The Fertility Counselling Service made a presentation to an Infertility Network UK organised event in June 2006 for users and professionals.

In September 2006 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety announced additional funding being made available to provide financial counselling on a regional basis. The Fertility Counselling Service is pursuing obtaining additional funding through Boards and Trusts.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

In December 2006 the Fertility Counselling Service carried out a Quality Assurance Survey. Full details on this are available on the Fertility Counselling Service web site – www.fertility-counsellingni.org A few of the comments of users in respect of the Service are listed here:-

“Really helpful – a lifeline in a stormy sea.”

“The counselling I received was second to none. I could not have gotten through without it.”

“The Service has been flexible – and when I needed it.”

Overall the feedback has proved positive and constructive. The Fertility Counselling Service intends to use the survey as a basis for building on existing contractual arrangements and developing new ones.

Social Concerns

Financial Assistance to Families and Individuals in Need

This service has developed from one based on individuals/families calling to the office seeking financial support, to one based on referral. This means the service has gone from being Belfast-centred to one that is provided on a regional basis. Referrals are accepted from clergy and social work agencies. Financial assistance as a way of showing the direct care and concern of the Church is available to families with children, the elderly, physically disabled people and people with a learning disability.

In the financial year 2005/06 a total of £5,147.03 was paid out in such disbursements. Of this amount £4,447.03 was paid out to the direct benefit of families with children.

The service to benefit children is funded through BBC Children in Need and the Church of Ireland Orphan and Children’s Society for the Counties of Antrim and Down.

A further practical expression of the Board’s support to families is the Christmas Toy Appeal. In 2006 a number of parishes from throughout Northern Ireland provided toys for distribution via Social Services and Women’s Aid.

Services to the Deaf, Hearing Impaired and Disabled

The Board provides management support and supervision to the Revd Canon Will Murphy who carries out pastoral duties to the deaf and people with hearing impairment. 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.

Canon Murphy is increasingly involved in raising awareness of wider disability issues, and not just those of the deaf/hearing impaired, in the Church as a whole. This has been done through providing training courses on disability access and through membership of the Working Group on Disability.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

The Board for Social Responsibility (N.I.) has increased its networking in the area of hearing disability through developing working relationships with the Revd Philip Maddock, Church of England Adviser to the Deaf and Disabled, and the Revd David Muir of the Republic of Ireland. Dr Judith McGaffin, Board member, is a member of the Working Group on Disability.

In addition the Board for Social Responsibility has recognised the need to ensure a proper and secure funding basis for a member of the clergy working with the hearing impaired and deaf community. This will benefit the members of the deaf community as well as the member of the clergy concerned.

Training for Parents

The Board in co-operation with the Mother's Union and the Church of Ireland Youth Department provided the final series of courses for parents entitled "Parenting Today" in the diocese of Down and Dromore in early 2006. The courses were run by Love for Life. In the Down and Dromore diocese the level of attendance was good, and the feedback on the quality of the course proved positive.

The "Parenting Today Courses" were funded with the generous support of the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund.

Child Contact Centres

The Board's Chief Executive is a member of the Management Committee of the Central Belfast Contact Centre. In addition he provides professional social work support and supervision to the co-ordinators at the Central Belfast Child Contact Centre.

In addition the Board's Chief Executive is the Secretary to the Northern Ireland Network of Child Contact Centres.

Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use

The Board has taken on this matter via an internal sub-committee and through membership of the Inter Church Addiction Project (ICAP).

In 2006 the Board's sub-committee produced a *Strategy and Plan for Christian Action on Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use 2005-2008*. See the Church of Ireland web site and the link to the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (N.I.).

This document was distributed for comment, and as a means of raising awareness to Church and Statutory Bodies throughout Northern Ireland.

Board members made presentations to the General Synod, The House of Bishops, Derry and Raphoe Synod and Down and Dromore Clergy Conference on the issue of 'Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use' and the 'Strategy and Plan in 2006'.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

The Board has also negotiated places on the Drugs and Alcohol Programme provided by the West Care Health Promotion Department.

To date, a number of Church of Ireland representatives, including clergy, have attended and completed the course.

ICAP remains an active inter-Church body investigating the need for a unit for young persons affected by drug and/or alcohol misuse. ICAP has commissioned a feasibility study by Deloitte, funded by North and West Belfast Health & Social Services Trust. ICAP intends to actively pursue provision of an inter-Church unit to help young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse.

Benefits Leaflets

The Board became involved in producing a leaflet for clergy on *Statutory Benefits for Families in 2006* – see the Church of Ireland web site and the link to the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (N.I.).

Due to an internal resource issue this document has not been distributed as widely as originally planned. The Board recognises a need to review this aspect of its work but does see benefits to clergy and parishioners in such publications in the future.

Guide for Faith Communities on Domestic Violence

The Board provided two members – the Revd Gordon Graham and Dr Joan Turner – to the Faith Communities Guidance Working Group on Domestic Violence. This Working Group has carried out work updating a Guide for Faith Communities on Domestic Violence. The Guide is in draft form at present and is due for publication in 2007. The Guide, as with the previous one produced in the 1990's, should prove to be a valuable resource to clergy and lay workers.

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

CHURCH OF IRELAND ADOPTION SOCIETY

	2005	2006
Unplanned Pregnancy Referrals	4	5
Adoption Enquiries:	114	95
Post Adoption Enquiries:	115	77
Adoption Orders Granted:	2	-
Children in Placement and Provided with Social Work Support	2	1
Independent Counselling Referrals	16	11
<u>Fertility Counselling Service:</u>		
	2005	2006
Referrals Received:	224	214
<u>Financial Assistance to Families and Individuals in Need:</u>		
	2005	2006
Family Cases:	56	22
Non-Family Cases:	8	5

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

Appendix III

Financial Section of BSR (NI) Report to General Synod May 2007

**Revenue Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2006
(being an extract from the latest audited accounts)**

	2006		2005	
	£	%	£	%
INCOME				
Donations & Subscriptions				
Dioceses				
Armagh	1,690		2,870	
Clogher	2,600		1,625	
Connor	4,485		4,415	
Derry and Raphoe	2,310		2,185	
Down and Dromore	4,220		4,296	
	<u>15,305</u>		<u>15,391</u>	
Church of Ireland Priorities Fund			12,000	
Dean of Belfast's Christmas Sit Out (for Fertility Counselling Work & Adoption Work)	2,000		2,000	
Other Includes anonymous Celebrate Recovery	9,832		200	
	<u>2,240</u>		<u> </u>	
	<u>29,557</u>	(12.9%)	<u>29,591</u>	(13.7%)
For Services Provided				
Social Work in Fertility Counselling and Adoption Work	76,129		83,553	
Church of Ireland Mission to the Deaf	11,355		14,829	
	<u>87,484</u>	(38.0%)	<u>98,382</u>	(45.6%)
From Investments and Cash Deposit Funds	10,802	(4.7%)	10,832	(5.0%)

Board for Social Responsibility (NI) – Report 2007

Grants From

Department of Health, Social Services And Public Safety:	83,474 (36.3%)	59,510 (27.6%)
	2006	2005
	£ %	£ %

INCOME continued

For Charitable Disbursement

BBC Children in Need	10,725	10,450
Protestant Orphan Society (for Counties Antrim & Down)	8,000	7,000
	<u>18,725 (8.1%)</u>	<u>17,450 (8.1%)</u>

Total Income	£230,042 (100%)	£215,765 (100%)
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INCOME b/f	2006	2005
	£ %	£ %

Expenditure

Operating

Staff Emoluments	164,065 (71.3%)	147,872 (68.5%)
Other Expenses	39,034 (17.0%)	33,292 (15.5%)
Accommodation including services	19,329 (8.4%)	13,763 (6.4%)
Miscellaneous	<u>2,117 (.1.0%)</u>	<u>1,964 (0.9%)</u>
Total	<u>224,545 (97.7%)</u>	<u>196,891 (91.3%)</u>

Charitable Disbursements	14,361 (6.2%)	19,965 (9.2%)
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Total Expenditure	£238,906 (103.9 %)	£216,856 100.5%
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(DEFICIT) for year	£(8,864) 3.9%	£(1,091) .5%
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Copies of the statutory accounts along with supporting schedules are available on request at the Board's office.