

boundaries put before them.

An extract from a book on sexual abuse and the Church may sum up the situation that occurred with Fr David: "One issue is naivety, with Church Leaders being unaware of the compulsive nature of much sex offending and the limitations of counselling. Another important issue is forgiveness. The confusion between forgiveness and trust is one reason why offenders have been allowed to continue in positions of pastoral responsibility even after it is known they have abused children."

Although latterly Fr David was not supposed to be in a position of pastoral responsibility there had been previous concerns, which may have been treated as low level concerns, and whilst some action was taken the position Fr David found himself in still allowed scope for future offending. The Community if they had ongoing concerns did not raise them with Fr David or each other, and that maybe an area where they need to grow in understanding and confidence so that they can challenge inappropriate behaviour. We acknowledge that Fr David may have given no overt cause for concern and in his most recent offending behaviour it is clear that he went to great lengths to meet the victim away from the Abbey grounds and the parish.

#### Conclusions:

There are some areas of concern and vulnerability arising from this review of arrangements and documentation:

1. There was no formal review arrangement in place to consider Fr David's restrictive covenant. Abbot Martin acknowledged that there is another member of the community currently subject to a restrictive contract for whom there are agreed review arrangements in place.
2. There was no active work with Fr David to address and confront the areas of concern about his behaviour, with a reliance placed on established pastoral and discipline arrangements within the community. In the context of sexual abuse concerns it would be sensible to explore opportunities for independent, specialist advice and consultation to support the internal governance processes.
3. Fr David was able to establish and maintain his relationship with his victim whilst living within the community. It is unclear the extent of knowledge within the community about the details of the restrictions placed on Fr David. Whilst it is important to treat information about individuals with care and confidentiality members of the community need to have sufficient information to enable them to exercise appropriate monitoring and reporting of concerns.
4. The young man was employed in the DPA when there was a member of the community subject to a restrictive behavioural contact. Given that there are members of the community subject to restrictive contracts it seems unwise to allow employment of young people under the age of 18 with the Abbey precincts.
5. The Abbey Child Protection Policy is undated, does not identify a review date and is a statement of intent rather than a clear guidance document to identify and support safe practice. The absence of provenance details and review arrangements can allow such documents to be treated in a rather mechanistic manner rather than viewing them as a contribution to active, positive safeguarding behaviour.
6. The Parish Child Protection Statement is again undated and the review arrangements are not specified.

#### Recommendations:

1. The Abbey and Parish should adopt and comply with the National Safeguarding Procedures of the Catholic Church in England & Wales (2015) (CCNSG 2015). Use of the Safeguarding Resource Pack should replace current reliance on the outdated Abbey Child Protection Policy.
2. Consideration should be given to sharing opportunities for awareness-raising and training in Safeguarding across the Abbey, Parish and school communities. This would serve to drive consistency and model an active, engaged approach to safeguarding as core activity in all settings.
3. Particular emphasis should be given to not only the policies and procedures relating to Safer Recruitment practices but also Creating a Safe Environment and Responding to Allegations procedures.
4. Consideration should be given to provision of advice and consultation to the Abbot and community when concerns have been identified. This should be separate from established pastoral and discipline arrangements. Such advice would encourage development of opportunities to explore the associated feelings and distress, with a view to supporting a focus on future practice