

**Review of deceased clergy files in
line with the requirements of the
Lowell Goddard Inquiry**

2016

Prepared by: Anest Gray Frazer
Independent Social Work Consultant

No safeguarding concerns identified from review of the limited information contained on file.

Name Redacted

No safeguarding concerns identified. No file, the limited information to hand contained in an A5 envelope.

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Unable to ascertain whether there were safeguarding concerns. No formal file, one letter to hand stored in an A4 envelope.

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2. Findings

- 2.1. There appears to be no current or retrospective electronic Management Information system listing all staff employed or previously employed by the Church of Wales. Administrative staff informed me that a new HR system is currently being introduced and rolled out. It is of significant concern that at present there is no systematic way of verifying that all of the relevant files were being reviewed.

- 2.2. On the Personal files whereby safeguarding concerns were identified, there was no reference to investigations / enquiries undertaken. There was no clear record of the safeguarding allegations and the nature of the concerns, how these were handled-how the information was followed up; actions taken; decisions reached. The outcome of the investigations was not clearly recorded and evidenced.
- 2.3. There was inconsistency in relation to Personal File structure and the information contained and found on file. The majority of the files reviewed as part of this Audit weren't kept in line with the new agreed File / Recording procedures. Limited information was contained on the files, most of the information contained related to HR correspondence i.e. letters to confirm appointment. No detailed information was available in relation to any safeguarding issues addressed, whether the individual in question had attended any training, notes of appraisals / supervision where safeguarding issues might have been raised or addressed. It was also of significant concern that some individuals did not have a personal file, information i.e. letters relating to HR issues were kept in an A4 / A3 envelope.
- 2.4. In general recording on the files reviewed was very poor and inconsistent. It was impossible to chronologically follow matters/ issues and ascertain what action was taken, within what timescales, and what the outcomes were. This related to HR issues and general matters.
- 2.5. From the cases reviewed and the limited information to hand there was no information that I felt required further investigation by the statutory authorities .I have noted my observations on a few cases where I feel that further safeguarding awareness work needed to be considered. However, in the case of **Name Redacted** although safeguarding issues were addressed as part of a disciplinary process matters were not referred to the appropriate agencies. Although there was recognition that the choices **Name Redacted** made in relation to the care of his children on two separate occasions were unsafe, there was no evidence to support the Bishop's decision not to refer the matter to statutory agencies. A referral at this late stage in my professional opinion would serve no purpose, but it may be useful to identify such situations as part of ongoing safeguarding awareness sessions for clergy to reinforce the statutory obligation to report all concerns.

3. Recommendations

4.1 The Church in Wales in my view needs to agree a robust process to record and manage all safeguarding concerns to ensure and evidence compliance to statutory duties and requirements. **It is my view, if any safeguarding concerns are raised in relation to an individual the following information must be recorded and stored on the Personal and Personnel file:**

Allegations/Concerns: Any information that relates to allegations of abuse or any information that relates to a concern around a risk of potential harm to a child or adult e.g. referral information, advice and guidance offered to Parishes, all correspondence must be kept on the relevant personal file.

Risk Assessments: Any information that relates to risk assessments and managing risk in church settings undertaken. If not undertaken the reasons why deemed un-necessary should be clearly specified and evidenced on file.

Outcome of investigations. – If issues discussed at the Safeguarding panel, record of the discussion should be placed on file. Where applicable details of any Social Services / Police investigations to be kept in this section. The relevant Safeguarding Officer should outline a summary and the outcome of any investigation on the file to validate the process.

This to include:

Criminal conviction - relevant information recorded.

Employment issues: Any information that relates to the recruitment, support and training in line with Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance (including information from the Disclosure and Barring Service)

Discipline: Details relating to disciplinary action taken should also be recorded on the file.

A record must also be kept of any other relevant information that relates to the safeguarding leadership and governance, and development of local safeguarding practices and policy when relevant and appropriate e.g. minutes of safeguarding panel, training, Quality Assurance processes etc.

4.2 A quality assurance process should also be established to ensure that adequate reporting and recording procedures are in place and are adhered to