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9. Issues For Attention

- The procedures for ensuring that supply priests and those entering England and Wales from abroad were not being followed with sufficient rigour. Reminders were sent out to Dioceses and Congregation Leaders, and the appropriate procedures were clarified.
- After some discussion, COPCA has confirmed its policy in relation to identity verification and the need, in line with the principles of Safe From Harm, to carry out interviews with all workers with children and vulnerable adults.
- Lourdes Pilgrimages have presented difficulties, both of volume for individual Dioceses, and, for those pilgrimages which are not related to a single Diocese, in the process of ensuring that Safe Environment policies and procedures, (including CRB checks and correct recruitment and selection processes) are instituted.
- In Dioceses and Religious Congregations, we noted that since COPCA began in early 2002, 18 Child Protection Co-ordinators are no longer in that role (including clergy, deacons and lay people) and 8 Child Protection Officers have moved on, with 2 Child Protection Officers arriving. It is important to find ways to maintain continuity so that knowledge is retained when changes are made.
- In Religious Congregations, congregation leadership and Child Protection Co-ordinator roles can change very rapidly. All these changes can disrupt the process of policy implementation and understanding of the child protection system and practice. We have developed a handover procedure to mitigate this.
- Annual Report returns have indicated for each year that few reports are made to the Protection of Children Act List. It is agreed policy to report all cases, in order to comply with best practice in preventing those who present a risk to children from seeking a role in other organisations.

10. The Self Audit Findings

The Self Audit process, which was piloted and run in Dioceses and selected Religious Congregations during 2006, has provided a helpful information base for moving forward developing practice in protecting vulnerable people and preventing abuse.

The experience of undertaking self audit processes is new in the Catholic Church, and it has run remarkably smoothly. The results of this first audit show that the Church has made good progress in implementing the policies, and give a clear understanding of what next steps are needed.

- In relation to Organisational Structures (2003), the audit revealed that arrangements for the professional supervision of Child Protection Co-ordinators and Officers have been difficult to put in place, and that attention to regular contact between Bishops and Child Protection Commission Chairs is needed in a few instances.
- The findings indicate that the policies on Responding to Allegations (2004) and Independent Risk Assessment (2004) are followed, although several respondents had not had to deal with any cases to date. Therefore it is more prudent to conclude that these policies are in some measure untested, and the value of the on-going work on clarifying the legal framework for such policies has been confirmed.



Sophie Robbins, Team Secretary

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- The preventative policy, *Creating a Safe Environment* (2005), was generally well implemented given its stage of development, and in the absence of the proposed national "Parish Pack." Work on developing local monitoring processes to provide confidence in the preventative system as a whole will be set in motion.
- The policy on Support for those who have experienced abuse (2006) was yet to be implemented in some cases, and others have still to formally appoint a support person. Support for those accused of abuse was slightly further advanced. This finding is not surprising given that the policy is of recent date.
- The findings of the audit have been sent to each Diocese and Congregation with suggestions and recommendations for action where appropriate. The key themes outlined above will be discussed with the Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious and with Chairs of Child Protection Commissions during 2007.
- The Self Audit will be repeated in subsequent years on a three year cycle. In 2007 a group of Religious Congregations and Dioceses, where substantial progress is planned, will be audited.



Keynote Conference – July 2006

Child Protection Commission working well and committed to future developments including external ecumenical events and networking.