

25. As the documentation review exercise was being progressed there were also increasing levels of guidance documentation being produced. That guidance documentation fell into 2 categories. Firstly, where safeguarding practice in the secular world changed e.g. the change from the Criminal Records Bureau to the Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”). Secondly, where demand for safeguarding guidance came from parishes, dioceses and Religious Orders. The Church is a large and diffuse organisation and its activities are myriad.
26. The major change in relation to CSAS policy and procedure documentation initiated in my time as director was that I commissioned an external firm to create an online safeguarding procedure manual for the Church. I cannot now remember the name of the firm instructed although they were Coventry based and they were selected in part because they managed the on-line safeguarding procedure manuals of a significant number of local authorities. That firm ensured the CSAS procedures were always up to date with changes to the law, government guidance and terminology (such as when activities once described as ‘*Child Protection*’ became ‘*Safeguarding*’)
27. The creation of the online safeguarding procedure manual change had 2 huge advantages. Firstly, it ensured version control. Secondly, with the increased volume of guidance and forms, etc. hyperlinks could be and were created in the manual to ensure ease of reference and navigation. Forms could be completed on-line and hard copies printed. Paragraph numbering and general layout of the core procedure documents remained largely the same as from Eileen Shearer’s time as director of COPCA. The role responsible for each particular action required where an allegation had been made or matters requiring investigation identified was made was very clear in the documentation and there was an easy to follow flow chart which contained hyper-links to other locations with the documentation that should be referred to and adhered to.
28. I was surprised to hear Ms Carmi’s evidence that in the first 3 years after I had left post, CSAS’ time was dedicated, almost exclusively it seems, to reviewing the procedures. I am aware the contract for managing the manual was terminated, and I can only speculate that this may have been done for cost saving purposes. I note that Ms Carmi gave evidence that the current CSAS documentation is lacking as regards hyperlinking and paragraph numbering amongst other matters. I cannot account for the current documentation as I have been out of post for some considerable time but that was not the case when I left CSAS. During my time as director of CSAS the procedure e-manual was highlighted by the Home Office in the publication ‘Working Together’ as an exemplar for other faith groups and bodies to emulate. It was also praised by the DBS. Having heard Ms Carmi’s evidence I have considered the current CSAS website. The appearance of that website is satisfactory in my opinion and appears on the surface to be set out well. However, I do not find it as easy to navigate as previously and as Ms Carmi’ noted there do not appear to be any hyperlinks to guidance making the whole affair rather unwieldy.