



THE DRUID NETWORK

Response to IICSA.

The Druid Network is an Internet based organisation, which aims, through connecting individuals and groups together, through coordinating efforts and initiative, and through actively interfacing with public bodies and the media, to inform, inspire and facilitate Druidry as a religion.

In September 2010, The Druid Network was registered as a charitable organisation for the advancement of religion for the benefit of the public. Registration number 1138265.

An AGM is held once a year and this is the only occasion when members formally meet in a physical context to discuss the business of the Druid Network and to elect the officers and trustees, which includes Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and three other trustees, making a total of seven who oversee the running of the network. The trustees meet monthly on-line and the minutes are circulated on-line to the membership.

Membership numbers are approximately 250, with the majority living in the United Kingdom, but it is a global network. In England, there are 111 members, and although well spread across the country, the majority live in the South West. Currently, only 2 members live in Wales. The network is funded by membership subscription giving them access to an online social area and members newsletter.

The Druid Network does not hold religious ceremonies.

As it is an on-line organisation, there is no direct engagement with its members except at the AGM.

Membership is open to individuals over eighteen years of age. However, dates of birth are not collected as part of the registration process. Membership subscription is paid via on-line means or by cheque, which indicates that the person is old enough to have their own bank account, therefore there is no child protection policy or Child Protection Officer currently in place as The Druid Network does not engage directly with children. The network does not hold events that involve unsupervised access to children.

The Druid Network does not have faith leaders nor does it provide chaplains or spiritual advisors.



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In the general interest and for consistency, it would be beneficial to all religious communities to have access to formal training with regards to child protection with emphasis on being able to recognise signs of abuse in all its forms, have a knowledge of how to elicit the information whilst making the child feel safe and how to report such information. Clear guidelines should be formulated to reflect this, to enable religious leaders or those in positions of authority in religious communities to refer any allegations of abuse to the statutory authorities and concealment of such should be made a criminal offence in order to protect those who are vulnerable.

Anyone with unsupervised access to children within any organisation should / must have an enhanced DBS check with supervision being by a person holding a current enhanced DBS certificate.

An independent inspecting/auditing body would be able to hold religious communities and their leaders to account if registration was to be put in place and become law. This body should include those with experience of child protection issues and may include members of various religious beliefs. If such a body was to be developed, training would be needed for consistency and policies put in place to deal with all eventualities.

Currently, The Druid Network does not have children as members, and does not engage directly with children. Therefore there has been no apparent need to include child protection. However, The Druid Network is aware of its responsibilities and has zero tolerance of any form of abuse or discrimination against vulnerable persons. The Network regularly reviews its activities and related policies and if it was felt to be necessary, a policy would be produced and agreed together with the appointment of a child protection officer. This person would have knowledge of child protection matters and receive training in this area to ensure the responsibilities of the network and all legal requirements met.

Phil Ryder
Current Chair of The Druid Network
For and on behalf of the trustees.