

# **A Programme For Action: Final Report Of The Independent Review On Child Protection In The Catholic Church In England And Wales**

*by Michael Nolan*

## **Introduction**

1.1 A year ago, the Archbishop of Westminster invited Lord Nolan to chair an independent committee to carry out a review on child protection in the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The Committee members are:

The Rt Hon The Lord Nolan (Chairman)  
The Rt Hon Sir Swinton Thomas (Vice-Chairman)  
*Retired Lord Justice of Appeal*  
Caroline Abrahams  
*Director of Public Policy, NCH*  
The Rev Tim Bryan  
*Detective Chief Inspector, Metropolitan Police (joined the Committee in October 2000)*  
Hilary Eldridge, BA(Hons), Dip SW, CQSW  
*Director, Lucy Faithfull Foundation*  
Monsignor Jack Kennedy  
*Child Protection Co-ordinator, Liverpool Archdiocese*  
Dr Maurice Lipsedge, MPhil, FRCP, FRCPsych, FFOM(Hon)  
*Formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, South London and the Maudsley NHS Trust*  
Gill Mackenzie  
*Chief Probation Officer of Gloucestershire and Chairman of the Association of Chief Probation Officers until April 2001*  
The Rt Rev Peter Smith  
*Bishop of East Anglia*  
David Veness  
*Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police*

Four members of the Committee are Catholics and six are not. Donald Findlater of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation has attended most of our meetings and his contribution has been invaluable.

Chris Brearley, formerly Director General in the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, is Secretary to the Review. We are greatly indebted to him and to many others for their help but particularly to Paddy Victory, Charles Wookey, James Parker, the Rt Rev Kieran Conry, Tom Horwood, Toby Mountford, Nicholas Coote and Conor Taaffe.

1.2 Our terms of reference are:

**To examine and review arrangements made for child protection and the prevention of abuse within the Catholic Church in England and Wales, and to make recommendations.**

It has not been our role to investigate or comment on individual cases and we have not done so.

1.3 The Committee met for the first time on 25 September 2000 and has held sixteen meetings in all. We received information about the present arrangements in dioceses and how they are working. We sought contributions to our work from all who wished to make them, and received over two hundred written submissions from both individuals and organisations. We also met with leading organisations in the field. We are most grateful to all those who took the time to contribute to our work; very many helpful suggestions have been made. We are also most grateful for an opportunity Lord Nolan had to discuss child protection issues with Bishop Laurence Forristal, Bishop of Ossory, and other members of an advisory committee of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

1.4 Our approach has been to identify good child protection practice and, wherever possible, to apply it to the policies and procedures of the Church in England and Wales. In the seven years since the bishops issued their pastoral and procedural guidelines on child abuse much has been learned in the UK about how to ensure that sound principles are translated into effective action on the ground.

1.5 This is our final report. It follows up the First Report, which we presented at Easter for the bishops' Low Week conference, and which made 50 recommendations about the structures and actions the Church should put in place to enable it to be an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse, in responding to it, and to rebuild confidence. That report has been generally well received. Our work and discussions since then have not led us to make any radical changes in what we proposed, but they have enabled us to refine and develop those conclusions. This final report is available on our website at [www.nolanreview.org.uk](http://www.nolanreview.org.uk).

1.6 Our intention is that this final report should be free-standing. The future reader should not have to read both our reports in order to have a full understanding of our reasoning and conclusions, but only this one. In consequence, while Chapter Two reviews the issues we have considered further since the First Report and our conclusions about them, Chapter Three summarises our thinking and conclusions on all the issues we have studied. It sets out the whole of our recommendations

- on the key structures required at parish, diocesan and national level and in religious orders;
- on the action needed to create as safe an environment as possible for children and those who work with them; and
- on the action needed to strengthen arrangements for responding to allegations of abuse.

Because of Chapter Three's comprehensive nature, there is inevitably some duplication between Chapters Two and Three of this report. In writing about the Catholic Church as well as about child protection we have had to use a number of specialised terms and, so far as possible, these are explained in the glossary at Annex A.

1.7 This final report, like our First Report, is unanimous. We emphasise that our recommendations complement and reinforce each other. They constitute a single programme of action.

## **Further Work Since our *First Report***

2.1.1 Since our *First Report* was published in April we have

presented it to the Bishops' Conference at their Low Week meeting, had a further meeting with the bishops, met representatives of the religious orders at a meeting arranged by the Conference of Religious, met a range of Catholic and other organisations (see Annex B), and received written comments and further contributions from 35 respondents.

Generally, our *First Report* has been welcomed but these further discussions and contributions have assisted our understanding of the issues, and have led us, together with other work we have done, to refine and add to our conclusions and recommendations. This chapter works through these issues and will be of particular interest to those who have read the *First Report*. The next chapter summarises the whole of our analysis and conclusions and recommendations.

### **Vulnerable adults**

2.2.1 We have received several comments suggesting that our work might be extended to cover the arrangements the Church should make to protect vulnerable adults, such as those with learning difficulties. A number of other comparable organisations have a single set of arrangements to cover children, young people and vulnerable adults. Such an extension would go beyond our remit and our expertise. We do, however, commend the Church to consider the need

for policies and arrangements in this area, and note that many of the systems we recommend may be capable of extension to cover vulnerable adults as well.

## **Canon law**

2.3.1 In making our recommendations we have been concerned to set out what the Church needs to do to protect children and deal with allegations about abuse. We are not expert in canon law (the Church's own code of law) but believe that for the most part our recommendations are compatible with canon law. If any difficulties do emerge in this regard we trust and expect that the Church authorities will deal with them responsively.

## **Organisation**

### **...in the parish**

2.4.1 Everyone we have talked to has confirmed the critical importance of the parish to effective child protection. But concerns have also been expressed about the scale of the action that will be necessary to raise and maintain local awareness of the issues, and to put and keep in place the arrangements we have recommended. We are under no illusions about either the commitment or the resource implications, but we believe that parishes and the whole Church are ready to meet the challenges posed by our recommendations.

2.4.2 Within the parish, the Child Protection Representative (*First Report*, Recommendation 5) has a key role. Doubt has been expressed about whether sufficient volunteers will come forward to fill these posts given the onerous nature of the responsibilities. We understand that the parishes that have already moved in this direction have in fact had little difficulty in finding suitable people willing to take on these responsibilities. Nonetheless, this concern underlines our view that a primary purpose of the diocesan and national arrangements is to give the parishes practical and moral support and to make their task as easy as possible. And we believe there may be particular value in the Parish Child Protection Representatives within each deanery meeting together regularly and forming a network to provide each other with mutual support and help and to make collective arrangements for such matters as training.

2.4.3 We recommended in the *First Report* that the parish priest should appoint these Child Protection Representatives. On reflection, however, we believe there may be more merit in their being appointed by the diocesan Child Protection Coordinator, following appropriate consultation within the parish, which would increase independence and transparency.

### **...in the diocese**

2.5.1 A key issue here is to what extent policy should be developed and agreed nationally and to what extent each diocese, reflecting the formal independence of bishops and dioceses, should develop its own. Our view is that the most desirable outcome would be a single set of policies adopted throughout the Church in England and Wales (including religious orders). So, while we recognise that bishops and religious superiors are each fully responsible for their own policies and arrangements, we recommend that they work together through the National Child Protection Unit (see Recommendation 16) to develop and implement such a single set of arrangements.

2.5.2 A number of respondents have commented on our observation (*First Report*, para 5.7) that the diocesan Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) need not be a child care professional. We do, however, remain of this view provided that the CPC is adequately trained and can readily draw on appropriate professional expertise whenever she/he needs it. We note the value of having full-time professional child care expertise within the diocesan (or religious order) team or, as in at least one case that we know of, shared between two or three dioceses (or religious orders). We also stress that it is essential that very close liaison is maintained between the CPC, the statutory agencies and the statutory Area Child Protection Committees. (Each local social services authority has an Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) which means that in some dioceses there will be a significant number of ACPCs to deal with; however, the benefit of close working relations is likely to be large.)

2.5.3 We said in the *First Report* that we did not consider it essential for CPCs to be priests (para 5.6 and Recommendation 8). Some of our respondents have wanted us to go further and to require CPCs to be lay people largely on the grounds that the position in which the Church finds itself has led to a lack of confidence in CPC priests. We do not feel that this is a necessary step, but we do emphasise the need for all Catholics and the public generally to have confidence in CPCs; this will be achieved by appointing the best person to the job without regard for whether they are female or male, clerical or lay.

2.5.4 Each CPC should make an annual report to the bishop or (see below) to the religious superior on actions taken and progress made during the year. Copies of these annual reports should be sent to the National Child Protection Unit.

#### **...in the religious order**

2.6.1 The written and oral responses from the religious communities have confirmed their desire to play the fullest possible part in implementing our recommendations to secure the protection of children and to respond to abuse. We are pleased to note that the Conference of Religious is represented on the team which the Bishops' Conference has set up to implement our reports. As noted in paragraph 2.5.1, we firmly believe that what is required are arrangements throughout the dioceses and religious orders in England and Wales that are equally thorough, integrated and indeed, so far as possible, the same. We are encouraged to believe that this can be achieved.

2.6.2 Nonetheless, the many religious orders in the Catholic Church in England and Wales are formally independent of the bishops, which was why we addressed recommendations directly to religious orders in our *First Report*. We said there (para 5.9) that it was essential that religious orders that have contact with children should appoint Child Protection Co-ordinators. But we should make it clear that we consider that all religious orders, whether or not their work normally brings them directly into contact with children, should have child protection arrangements, including CPCs. This is because there can never be a guarantee that members of any religious order will not have contact with children and their particular status will make that a privileged relationship.

2.6.3 We also believe, however, that for many religious orders, particularly the smaller ones, it will be entirely appropriate for them to join together with each other or with a chosen diocese and to appoint a CPC jointly or a diocesan CPC to act for them.

#### **...in seminaries and other places of formation**

2.7.1 Seminaries and some other formation houses (i.e. institutions where candidates for the priesthood or permanent diaconate are trained) are independent of the diocesan and religious order structure but must not fail to be covered by appropriate arrangements. We recommend that they should appoint CPCs, adopt policies and implement guidelines in the same way as we have set out for dioceses. They may wish to appoint a diocesan or religious order CPC to act for them.

#### **...at national level**

2.8.1 Our proposal for a National Child Protection Unit (NCPU) (*First Report*, Recommendation 11), supported by an advisory group, has been widely welcomed. As foreshadowed in paragraphs 2.5.1 and 2.6.1 we believe that the Unit should advise the Conference of Bishops and the Conference of Religious on child protection policies, with the dioceses and religious orders then being responsible for implementation.

2.8.2 We described the tasks of the NCPU (*First Report*, para 5.10) as being

- to give expert advice and moral support to parishes, dioceses and religious orders;
- to collect and disseminate good practice;
- to hold databases of training facilities and other useful information;
- to maintain the central confidential database;
- to liaise with the statutory agencies at national level, with professional bodies, leading charities in the field and other churches; and

- to collect data, monitor arrangements in parishes, dioceses and religious orders on an ongoing basis, and seek to secure improvements where necessary.

Some have observed that the last of these (monitoring and audit) is not easily compatible with the support and advice function referred to earlier and have wondered whether there ought to be arrangements for independent assessment of diocesan and religious order arrangements. The question has also been raised as to what happens if effective arrangements are not implemented in a particular area, or if recommendations for improvement are not pursued.

2.8.3 We are not excessively concerned with the possible conflict between the audit and advice functions. Provided that the Unit is resourced adequately and with staff of sufficient standing, we believe that it can discharge both functions well. We also have confidence that our proposals for the Unit to make reports and for the publication of their annual reports will create the necessary climate to secure improvements should that prove to be necessary.

## **Creating a safe environment**

2.9.1 Our *First Report* stressed the importance of putting in place effective policies for child protection and to prevent abuse. We built a series of recommendations on the principles set out in the Home Office document *Safe From Harm* and policies in *Working Together*, and began by setting out a policy statement for the Church (*First Report*, Recommendation 4) which has been well received.

### **Practical guidance and codes of conduct**

2.9.2 Since the *First Report*, we have been able to look at a range of practical guidance and codes of conduct adopted by various organisations to minimise situations where the abuse of children can occur. There seem to be many examples of good practice (one example of a code is at Annex C and one of guidance on working with children at Annex D) and it is clear that best practice is developing over time. We have therefore concluded that rather than define such material ourselves (which might quite quickly become outdated) it should be part of the NCPU's remit to issue practical guidance on working with children and a code of conduct, in line with current best practice, and subsequently to keep them under review.

2.9.3 We are also aware that some dioceses have set out a statement to guide children themselves, sometimes called a Declaration of Children's Rights. This is one of them:

'God has given you the right to be cared for by people you can trust  
 God gives you the right not to be hurt in your body by grown-ups  
 God has given you the right to have your feelings taken seriously  
 And so  
 Never believe somebody who tells you a secret you must not tell your parents  
 Never believe somebody who says it is your fault that you are being hurt or frightened  
 If a grown-up does not take you seriously or believe you, you must talk to someone else  
 If you are uncertain about something a grown-up tells you to do, ask your parents or teachers about it'

Raising children's own awareness of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is an important part of successful child protection policies and we commend this statement as an example of good practice.

2.9.4 Essentially, however, it is adults who are responsible for protecting children and challenging the behaviour of other adults that may threaten them. For this reason, it is important to raise the awareness of all adults involved with the Church, rather than just workers, about what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and what children's expectations should be. This will make an important contribution to successful child protection. We recommend that guidance issued by the National Unit should cover this aspect.

## **Sacrament of reconciliation (confession)**

2.9.5 The arrangements for confession for children are one particular aspect of managing the organisation to prevent abuse or even the suspicion of abuse which we have considered further. It is already the case that some priests administer this sacrament in a setting where both priest and lay person can be seen but not heard. We recommend that wherever possible this should be the norm for the confessions of children; other arrangements should be exceptional and should be eliminated as opportunity allows.

## **The independent person**

2.9.6 A number of our respondents have commented on our recommendation (*First Report*, Recommendation 14) that there should be an independent person for children to talk to if they so wish. The experience in other churches and organisations is that such people are little called on as children prefer to talk to someone they know, or else to use one of the helplines provided by charities. We acknowledge that this may be so but continue to think that such an appointment would be worthwhile to complement the other arrangements that concerned children might use. However, we now suggest that these appointments should generally be made by the diocese or religious order rather than by each parish.

## **Choosing staff and volunteers**

2.9.7 We have been taken to task by some for not sufficiently distinguishing the role of volunteers in the Church nor recognising that they may not be prepared to go through the checks and procedures that we recommend. It is true that talking about staff, posts, job descriptions, and so on, is more suited to the employee than the volunteer relationship. However, our experience is that volunteers and lay workers are determined to do as professional a job as paid workers. Most people will understand why great care is taken over the employment of teachers and others who work professionally with children. We are therefore confident that volunteer workers with children, in parishes and elsewhere, will accept the need for the procedures we outline, provided that the reasons for them are well explained - namely the protection of children from abuse and of those who work with them from suspicion.

2.9.8 Our *First Report* made recommendations (17 to 26) about selection and appointment and one recommendation (27) about review. We have subsequently considered what should happen in respect of paid workers and volunteers who are already in post. In some cases checks in line with our recommendations will already have been undertaken on appointment. Even in those cases there may be a need to bring those checks up to date. And in other cases we recommend that checks be made with the Criminal Records Bureau.

2.9.9 The Committee's remit and recommendations cover the Church in England and Wales. But, of course, individuals may come to serve in or work for the Church from other countries, and some responsibility will also exist where members of organisations based in England and Wales go to serve elsewhere (e.g. missionaries). We recommend that anyone coming from abroad should be treated as a new applicant. In their case, however, the process may be made more difficult because referees and other information will be at a distance while there may also be relevant cultural differences. Modern communications systems are probably acting to reduce the first difficulty. It is, however, important not to 'make do' with information or assessments that are any less rigorous than would apply to someone in this country.

2.9.10 As regards individuals from England and Wales serving elsewhere, the key principles should be that any relevant information requested by the new employer is willingly and candidly provided; in any event if there are any relevant concerns these should be explicitly made known to the new employer even if they are not requested; and where the employer is in fact based in England and Wales (e.g. a religious order) they should follow the same principles as we have recommended for use here.

2.9.11 Following our discussions, we re-emphasise the importance of seminary rectors and others responsible for the formation and training of candidates for the priesthood and the permanent diaconate having access to all the necessary information from the selection process. (See *First Report*, para 3.18.)

2.9.12 Recommendation 25 of our *First Report* concerned the establishment and maintenance of a national database of information on all applicant candidates for ordained ministry. For candidates who are then ordained the information held should, of course, be kept up to date thereafter. We also recommend that the scope of the database should be extended to those who are applying to become permanent deacons.

2.9.13 We have also considered whether the scope of the database should be extended to lay workers and volunteers. In principle there is a good case to do this though it would clearly be a considerable extension of the scope of the database and greatly increase the complexity of maintaining it. Nonetheless, we believe that the National Unit should look at the possibility of this. In any event we recommend that dioceses and religious orders should themselves maintain records of checks and references on prospective staff and volunteers for the diocese or order, and that such records are consulted by other dioceses and orders as necessary.

## **Records**

2.9.14 We have a little more to say about record keeping in the context of allegations (2.10.23) but we also have some general recommendations:

1. As far as possible, records should be made at the time of a check, allegation or other event (so that the memory is fresh and accurate).
2. Confidentiality of records should be scrupulously maintained. Information in them should only be released to those in positions of responsibility who have good reason to need it for the protection of children. Individuals are, of course, entitled to access information about themselves, subject to certain statutory exclusions.
3. Records will need to be kept for a long time - we recommend 100 years. This is a long time but child abuse frequently comes to light many years after it occurred and it is very desirable, when it does, to be able to access records of the time. This points in particular to not destroying records when individuals die.

## **Training, awareness and support**

2.9.15 All those with knowledge of the field who have written or talked to us have reinforced our view of the central position that really good awareness raising and training and support arrangements have in contributing to successful child protection. Nor is this simply about formal training by professionals. There is also a key role for the passing on of experience within the Church's communities from those who work with children professionally (teachers, care workers and so on) or have worked with them in a voluntary capacity within the Church for many years to those who are newly becoming involved.

## **Further Work Since our *First Report* (continued)**

### **Responding to allegations**

2.10.1 In our *First Report* we used the term 'disclosure' to describe a situation where a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual, and 'suspicion' to describe a situation where there is no disclosure but there is a concern that abuse may have taken place. (See *First Report*, Glossary.) There is, therefore, no presumption on our part that abuse has in fact taken place when we talk of a disclosure being made or a suspicion raised. We want to emphasise this because we are aware that the words, particularly 'disclosure', can carry such a connotation. We believe, however, that it would be too unwieldy to be constantly using the phrases 'alleged disclosure' and 'alleged suspicion' and we do not propose to do so. The same applies to 'victim' and 'survivor'.

2.10.2 Some have also been concerned that some of the language in our *First Report* might imply that some incidents of abuse are not 'serious' or, at the least, that some are 'less serious' than others. We need to make it clear here that our terms of reference and, therefore, our reports cover the whole range of child abuse including physical and emotional as well as sexual abuse. Our position is that all child abuse is serious but, within the broad range of categories of abuse, some cases of abuse are more serious than others.

## **The Child Protection Management Team**

2.10.3 Our *First Report* (para 4.4 and Recommendations 30 and 31) describes the Child Protection Management Team (CPMT), which we recommend each diocese and religious order should have. As stated there, it is essential that suitably trained child care professionals are included in this team. (We also note that if the communications officer on the Team is not the Diocesan Communications Officer then the latter should be kept informed of the CPMT's business.)

2.10.4 We believe that the Child Protection Management Team needs to meet at least quarterly so that its members can speak with confidence and monitor the overall diocesan or religious order strategy in respect of child protection issues. The task of the Team needs to be clearly defined and care taken to ensure that it does not usurp the work of strategy meetings which are normally convened and chaired by statutory workers. The CPMT's tasks include

- advising and supporting the CPC,
- assisting with decision making,
- hearing what action has been taken in response to disclosures or suspicions,
- ensuring that the statutory agencies are involved with appropriate speed,
- receiving information on steps taken to remove paid or lay workers, or a priest, from post while enquiries are made, and
- satisfying themselves that arrangements are made to safeguard the interests of children.

They have a particularly important role when concerns are expressed but no court proceedings are likely and may advise on the steps to be taken in order to assess risk and the subsequent management of the person accused. Even in these cases, the advice and involvement of the statutory services should always be considered.

### **Disclosures and suspicions: false or malicious allegations**

2.10.5 Our belief is that most concerns are raised in good faith and have some foundation. This is well supported by the evidence concerning cases in the Church. Nonetheless it is also important to recognise that false, even malicious, allegations of abuse are sometimes made and that they can have very destructive effects on those concerned. This makes it important both that alleged abusers are given proper support while an initial process of discernment is taking place, and that appropriate action is taken to reinstate individuals quickly when allegations are found to be false. Appropriate action should be taken to hold the makers of malicious allegations to account.

### **Disclosures and suspicions: whistle blowing**

2.10.6 A 'whistle blower' might be defined in the context of the Church as a priest, lay worker or volunteer who has and reports concerns about another member of the organisation. Our *First Report* perhaps made too little of the anxieties that such people are likely to feel in raising and reporting concerns. These anxieties are likely to be greater if they believe that people of high standing in the Church are involved, or that their concern may not be acted on or their own position may be put at risk. They need to have confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted on appropriately.

2.10.7 We intended that the procedures set out in the *First Report* for making and handling allegations should be capable of use by members of the Church and that they should be reassured that no blame or suspicion of having 'let the side down' will be attached to them. Rather the contrary. This is therefore a cultural issue for the Church: to make it clear in all work on training and awareness in this field that members of the Church who bring forward concerns are acting in the interests of the Church (and should be so regarded by all other members of the Church, not just the authorities), that they will be treated with respect, have their concerns taken seriously and have absolutely nothing to fear in regard to their own position. In particular, there should be reassurance that taking concerns directly to the statutory authorities is a perfectly acceptable thing to do.

2.10.8 This is easier said than done. Our proposals for responding to allegations of abuse are, in management speak, 'off-line', i.e. they do not assume that the priest or bishop, or a lay manager

if there is one, should be the first port of call. Concerned individuals can go to the 'independent person' for the diocese or parish, to the CPC or, indeed, to any individual they trust. We can see, however, that in some circumstances those with concerns may still be anxious. So we recommend that in addition, they should be able to approach the Head of the NCPU or named members of the NCPU's advisory group (see Recommendation 20). We also recommend that the NCPU should draw up a policy on whistle blowing in the context of concerns about child abuse.

#### **Disclosures and suspicions: other**

2.10.9 Our *First Report* (Recommendation 33) said that anyone reporting an allegation or concern should be informed in writing of the advice they were given. We also recommend that, once the information is received by the CPC, he/she should write to indicate how the matter will be dealt with and to give an estimate of how long it may take. Generally, the person who raised the concern should be kept informed subsequently of any steps that have been taken, subject to legal constraints and appropriate confidentiality. We note that where there is a disclosure, the lead in all matters, including this issue of keeping people informed, will be taken by the statutory agencies. Where the person who raised the concern is him/herself the alleged victim or survivor, it is all the more important that he/she is treated with consideration and kept well informed of what is happening. On the other hand, in those cases where this person is a child or vulnerable adult, particular care will be needed about how, and sometimes about whether, this is done, in order to protect their position.

#### **Risk assessment**

2.10.10 Comments on the *First Report* suggest that it is not as clear as we would have wished about who is or should be doing what assessments and when. This is our fault for using the term 'risk assessment' to cover both an initial process of discernment about whether there is cause for concern and a thorough technical assessment of the risk posed by a person to children now and in the future. The links that we have recommended CPCs and Child Protection Teams should establish with the local statutory Area Child Protection Committees are important here. They should enable protocols to be established in this area and ensure regular co-operation and exchange of views. We would expect that:

(a) when there is a disclosure, the statutory authorities should be brought in straight away, without any process of filtering, to take the lead in investigating and assessing the situation. There is no need in these circumstances for an assessment to be initiated by the CPMT. However, it is important that the CPMT maintains constructive dialogue with the statutory agencies to apprise itself of any immediate issues of risk of which the Church needs to be aware.

(b) where there is only a suspicion, there is a need for an initial assessment to discern simply whether there are concerns that should be acted upon. (We emphasise the wide spectrum of cases that may arise, such as abusive language, a person behaving inappropriately with young people, a veiled accusation half-hinted at and then denied.) If there are any concerns, then the statutory authorities should be brought in as in (a). They will then be able to make a considered assessment based on all the relevant information that they have (and which might include information about the alleged victim, about the discloser, if it was someone other than the victim, and about the alleged perpetrator).

(c) later, after an allegation has been investigated, the case may be dropped or the alleged perpetrator found not guilty even though concerns remain. In these circumstances, a thorough risk assessment should be made. Desirably this assessment will be undertaken with the statutory authorities, or at least with the benefit of relevant evidence collected by them in the course of their investigations. The outcome of this risk assessment should always be acted on to ensure that a person is not placed in any role that might put children at risk.

#### **Administrative leave**

2.10.11 Since our *First Report* we have been able to consider further the relationship between the provisions of canon law and our recommendation that priests and deacons should be put on administrative leave in those circumstances where lay personnel would be suspended while allegations were investigated. We underline the importance of the Church having satisfactory

procedures to achieve the withdrawal of the priest or deacon from contact with children in these circumstances. It is well understood in professions such as teaching that suspension in these circumstances does not imply guilt.

### **Allegations against a Child Protection Co-ordinator**

2.10.12 The *First Report* dealt with the general handling of allegations and then with the special case of allegations against a bishop. The Child Protection Co-ordinator's central position in the arrangements for handling allegations means that we should also have dealt with the handling of cases where she/he is her/himself the subject of allegations. And by extension we should say something about the handling of cases concerning anyone who has a role in the child protection arrangements.

2.10.13 The fundamental principle is that no-one should have any part in the handling of allegations concerning themselves, and every effort should be made to ensure that they do not even hear of any such allegations prematurely.

2.10.14 We recommend that the maker/recipient of any allegations concerning a CPC should refer the case to the bishop or religious superior (rather than to the CPC) who will arrange for it to be handled by the CPC and team of another diocese or order.

2.10.15 Similarly there may be an allegation against a member of the Child Protection Policy or Management Team. Of course the person making/reporting the allegation will not necessarily know who these people are. What we suggest in this case is that the CPC should be informed of the allegation (as we have suggested for the general case) and then for her/him to ensure that it is assessed and handled by the CPC and team of another diocese or order.

### **Help and support**

2.10.16 It has been suggested that the different terms we use in our *First Report* to describe the arrangements for victims, parishes and alleged abusers ('Help for the victim', 'Support for the parish', 'Advice for the alleged abuser') are not very helpful as they can be taken to suggest that victims do not need advice and alleged abusers do not need help. On reflection, we agree with this comment and in this report use the word 'support' to cover all three situations.

2.10.17 One further and substantial point has been made to us about support. The need for victims/survivors to be given support may last for very many years and is not simply something for the weeks or months after disclosure. We agree with this and believe the Church should do whatever it can to support and foster the development of support services to meet the needs, including the spiritual needs, of survivors and their families. The National Unit should compile and maintain a database of such services.

### **Laicisation**

2.10.18 Our recommendation (*First Report*, Recommendation 49) about laicisation of priests and deacons has proved to be among the most controversial. Some believe that any caution or conviction for a child abuse offence should automatically result in laicisation (comparably, it is said, with the position for those, such as teachers, who work with children professionally). We do not agree. Our report covers the whole range of child abuse, not only sexual abuse, and laicisation will not be a proportionate response in every case. We do, however recommend that, as a general rule, clergy and lay workers who have been cautioned or convicted of an offence against children should not be allowed to hold any position that could possibly put children at risk again. The bishop or religious superior should justify publicly any exceptions to this approach (for example, by means of a letter to be read out in churches at Mass).

2.10.19 Secondly, in our recommendation we were concerned to make plain that there is a level of seriousness, as demonstrated by the criminal courts, at which we would expect the process of laicisation always to be begun. We did not mean to imply by this, however, that laicisation was never appropriate for a lesser sentence. For example, an abuser may have a number of shorter

sentences or cautions and laicisation may be appropriate in such cases. The judgement about initiating laicisation must turn on the facts of particular cases.

2.10.20 Thirdly, there was concern from some canon lawyers that we should understand that laicisation (except by consent) is the decision of a tribunal at the end of a legal process. We do understand this; what we recommend is that the process should be initiated. We also appreciate that in cases where the events took place some years ago the normal canon law process would not be available because of the statute of limitations. However, we understand that even such cases can be taken forward by reference to the Holy See.

2.10.21 In reviewing our recommendations here, we have revised the criterion for initiating laicisation from 'more than 12 months' to '12 months or more'. This brings it into alignment with the level at which, under English law, adult offenders are statutorily disqualified from working with children.

2.10.22 We should add that laicisation does not mean that the Church has no further part to play in relation to the abuser. As with lay worker abusers who are no longer employed by the Church, the Church may nonetheless be able to assist with the rehabilitation and pastoral needs of the individual.

## **Records**

2.10.23 We discussed record keeping generally at 2.9.14. What we wish to emphasise here is the importance of keeping good records, made at the time, on all disclosures and suspicions. As already noted, allegations can surface long after the event and it is most important that accurate, contemporary records are available. It is an important responsibility of the CPC to ensure that this is done.

## **Other points**

### **Mistakes and lapses**

2.11.1 Even with a culture of vigilance, mistakes will be made. Examples might include a failure to take up references correctly, being alone with a child when this should not have occurred or failure to report/pursue an allegation. It is important that mistakes are not ignored or covered up. They should be corrected wherever possible and lessons learnt. We therefore recommend that mistakes should be acknowledged (publicly if necessary), recorded, reported (as appropriate) and rectified wherever possible. If the mistake indicates that systems need to be changed, then that should be done.

2.11.2 In this connection it is important that the culture should be one which encourages people to admit mistakes, so that someone who has made a mistake will not feel inhibited from acknowledging it and handling it in the right way. Training will undoubtedly have a significant part to play. So will good supervision and mentoring. Inevitably, consistently making mistakes will suggest that an individual cannot cope with their responsibilities; these may need to be changed to ensure that children are adequately protected.

### **Child abusers in the congregation**

2.11.3 It has been pointed out to us that comprehensive proposals for child protection in the Church need to include policies with respect to child abusers who are intent on not re-offending and are present in the congregation but not in positions of responsibility. The Church will want to minister to such individuals but it will also be necessary to establish clear boundaries for the protection of the young and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse. Some other churches address this issue by drawing up a form of agreement with the involvement of the abuser, key personnel in the parish and statutory workers (including the probation officer, if any). We recommend this for the Catholic Church. Such an agreement could cover

- the risks posed to the Church and young people and how they should be managed;

- how those in the parish who 'need to know' can best respond in order to help the abuser in their efforts not to repeat their abusive behaviour;
- the level and kind of involvement in parish activities that is considered safe and acceptable, and how to monitor it;
- what to do if the agreement is not adhered to.

We suggest that the NCPU should prepare and issue further guidance on arrangements to be put in place to enable the safe participation of former child abusers in the life of the Church.

## **Our complete recommendations (*Recommendations 1 to 20*)**

### **Safeguarding children from abuse**

#### **Background**

3.1.1 Little information is available about the true extent of child abuse in Britain. Official data only records what is brought to the attention of the authorities. For example, child protection registers record the numbers of children (currently about 30,000) for whom the likelihood of future significant harm is high. They do not record those who are known to have been subjected to maltreatment in the past, and therefore give no estimate of prevalence or incidence.

3.1.2 As regards sex abuse, a Home Office study in 1995 showed that if the Sex Offenders Register had been in effect since 1953, 125,000 offenders would have to register, 25,000 of these for life. Most incidents are not reported and only a minority of reported cases result in prosecution. We do know, however, that offenders come from every social group and category. Most, but not all, sex offenders are male. The majority of offences are committed by individuals known to the child and often by the family. 80% of offences against children are perpetrated in their home or that of the perpetrator. Girls are more likely to be abused within the family, boys outside. Histories of individual offending can range between a single event within or outside the family to ongoing abuse over many years. Emotional loneliness, brought about by an inability to make close adult relationships, combined with a tendency to meet emotional needs sexually and distorted perceptions of and interest in children can increase the risk of someone offending. The availability and use of pornography and/or drugs and alcohol may dis-inhibit potential perpetrators. Add a context in which the perpetrator feels he/she will not be caught and the likelihood of offending is even more increased.

3.1.3 Knowledge of and concern about child abuse in Britain grew considerably during the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1994, following a consultation, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales received a working party report *Child Abuse: Pastoral and Procedural Guidelines* (referred to throughout this report as the 1994 Guidelines). This was commended by the bishops to dioceses and religious orders. In 1996, another Church working party produced a further report on victims and survivors, *Healing the Wound of Child Sexual Abuse*. In the meantime, public knowledge and concern about child abuse in the UK was continuing to grow. It was emphasised in 1994 that the Guidelines would need to be kept under review in the light of increasing knowledge about child abuse in general and the effectiveness of the procedures in particular. The Church began an internal review of the arrangements in dioceses some two years ago. In addition, however, a number of high profile cases concerning priests have focused public attention on the extent of the Church's commitment and the adequacy of its arrangements. It is against this background that our review has been conducted.

#### **The range of abuse**

3.1.4 Much of the publicity about child abuse concentrates on sexual abuse, but there is also emotional and physical abuse and neglect. (We are also aware that the internet has enabled different manifestations of abuse to develop.) Our report covers all aspects.

## **Child abuse is a great evil**

3.1.5 Child abuse is a great evil. All abuse can leave deep scars on victims and their families. It is particularly abhorrent when people in a position of trust and responsibility abuse a child. It is most abhorrent when that position of trust is that of a member of the clergy or a lay church worker.

## **The care of children is at the forefront of the teachings of Christ**

3.1.6 In our society we expect all organisations that have responsibility for the care of children to have arrangements that protect those children and promote their welfare. The care of children is at the forefront of the teachings of Christ and is, therefore, one of the primary responsibilities of all members of the Church led by their priests, bishops and religious superiors. Because of the Church's particular message and the position it holds, it seems to us to be of great importance that it should be an example of excellence, which others will look to and want to follow. To achieve this depends on good policies and effective management and people, to being alert to what is going on in the world that relates to the Church's mission and to being open to advice and guidance. A vigorous approach on these lines will enable the Church to become a significant part of the solution to the evil of child abuse in our society.

3.1.7 What we have heard leaves us in no doubt that there is a great desire among the huge majority of members of the Church, both clerical and lay, to achieve this result. We have also been impressed by the work that many in the Church are already doing to bring this about. We wish to recognise specifically the many hours of confidential pastoral care and support that has been given by clergy and religious to victims of abuse up and down the country to assist them in their journey of recovery. Our report, therefore, is based on this foundation:

### **Recommendation 1. The Catholic Church in England and Wales should become an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse and in responding to it.**

3.1.8 The 1994 Guidelines concentrated on the response to allegations of child abuse. In the present climate, much more emphasis is placed on child protection and it is worthy of note that almost all dioceses have in fact adopted policies and practices that are designed to prevent abuse occurring in the first place. Whilst the proper handling of allegations is important, it is much more important that the opportunity for abuse does not occur because awareness is high and an effective regime of good practice is in place, and is known to be so.

### **Recommendation 2. The top priority is to have preventative policies and practices operating effectively in parishes, dioceses and religious orders that will minimise the opportunity for abuse.**

3.1.9 It is necessary, however, to face the reality that no organisation which has dealings with children can eliminate the risk of child abuse completely. It is therefore important to complement prevention policies with a clear understanding by those in positions of responsibility that abuse of their position in any way will inevitably have the most serious consequences for them.

## **Application to lay workers as well as clergy**

3.1.10 There is an emphasis in the 1994 Guidelines on the position of members of the clergy. That is understandable because of the unique character of the priesthood and the central role that priests play in the life of the Church. For the same reason, of course, the occasions on which priests have been found guilty of abusive behaviour have been the source of the greatest scandal. But, as we know, child abuse occurs in a variety of settings in the home and in organisations, predominantly where some relationship has been established. The potential for abuse is therefore a risk in any organisation or setting where children are a part. So, what is necessary, and what we are recommending, are arrangements that apply to lay workers as fully as to clergy, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.

## **A unified approach**

3.1.11 It is crucial that the policies and practices we recommend are implemented throughout the Church and are, therefore, adopted both by bishops and their dioceses and by religious superiors and their orders. As we recommend later there will need to be monitoring of what is being done and effective action to remedy the situation if that is necessary. This is not as straightforward as it may sound. Whilst it is true that the Church is a hierarchical organisation, the common belief that, for example, the Archbishop of Westminster has complete authority over matters affecting the different dioceses in England and Wales is not the case. Each diocesan bishop exercises his power autonomously though not in a totally independent manner. He must act in accordance with the norms of canon law, and in communion with the whole episcopal college and with its head, the Pope. In canon law, every diocesan bishop has equivalent status, and only the Holy See has the power to control and limit the exercise of the bishops' power. Religious orders are governed by their own specific law and constitutions and, in general, the diocesan bishop has no capacity to intervene in their internal affairs. He does, however, have a certain authority over individual members of those orders and congregations whom he has given permission to exercise a pastoral ministry in his diocese.

3.1.12 However, we are confident that, by acting together in the best interests of children and of the Church, bishops and religious superiors can put in place arrangements which are effective and can restore confidence in the Church's approach. The essence of these arrangements is summarised in our third recommendation:

### **Recommendation 3. The whole Church in England and Wales and the individual bishops and religious superiors should commit themselves to:**

- a single set of policies, principles and practices based on the Paramountcy Principle, the 13 principles of Safe From Harm, and the revised Working Together guidelines;
- effective and speedy implementation in parishes, dioceses and religious orders, including a comprehensive programme to raise awareness and train those involved in implementing child protection policies;
- an organisational structure in the parish, supported by the Child Protection Co-ordinator and his/her Teams at the diocese and in religious orders;
- a national capability (the National Child Protection Unit) which will advise dioceses and orders, co-ordinate where necessary, and monitor and report on progress; and
- the provision of adequate resources to support these arrangements.

## **A clear and shared policy**

3.1.13 Active implementation of good practice on preventing abuse and responding to allegations of abuse is the key. But this action needs to be related to a clear and shared policy.

### **Recommendation 4. The Church should adopt this policy statement:**

The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of children towards whom it has a special responsibility and a duty of care. The Church, and individual members of it, undertake to do all in their power to create a safe environment for children and to prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The Church authorities will liaise closely with statutory agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly and properly dealt with, victims supported and perpetrators held to account.

## **The structures required to safeguard children from abuse**

3.2.1 Carrying through our recommendations on preventing child abuse and responding to allegations depends critically on the Church being an effective and aware organisation at every level: the parish, the diocese and religious order, and nationally. This section summarises our proposals on structures.

## The parish

3.2.2 It is principally in the parish that children are directly involved in church activities: in services, at children's catechism, in youth clubs, and so on. Consequently it is here that awareness needs to be at its highest, that policies and prevention strategies need to be clearly understood and that knowledge of what to do when allegations are made needs to be widespread. What we say about arrangements at other levels is designed primarily to support parishes.

3.2.3 In some dioceses individual lay people in parishes have taken on a special responsibility for child protection matters: ensuring that policies are known and understood, that awareness is raised, and that principles are worked through into everyday practice. This is clearly an important responsibility. We understand that members of the Church have willingly come forward to do this knowing that they will be supported by their parish priest, by the local members of the Church and by wider structures. To our mind, this indicates the desire that there is in many parishes to ensure that the Church is a safe organisation for children. We believe that every parish should have such a person (we call them the Parish Child Protection Representative). To ensure independence and transparency we also recommend that these parish representatives should be appointed by the diocesan Child Protection Coordinator (see below), following appropriate consultation within the parish.

**Recommendation 5. A lay Parish Child Protection Representative (PCPR) should be appointed in every parish and have these general responsibilities: to ensure that diocesan policies and procedures are known and followed, that awareness is raised, and that principles are worked through into everyday practice.**

**Recommendation 6. The PCPR should be appointed by the diocesan Child Protection Co-ordinator (see below) after appropriate consultation in the parish.**

3.2.4 The Parish Child Protection Representative does not need to be full-time, nor to be a professional or an expert. He/she will, of course, need training but will also be able to draw on experts for support. We believe there may also be particular value for PCPRs if those within each deanery form a network which meets together regularly to provide each other with mutual support and help and to make collective arrangements for such matters as training.

**Recommendation 7. PCPRs within each deanery should meet together regularly to provide each other with mutual support and help.**

## The diocese

3.2.5 As noted earlier, the 1994 Guidelines advised each diocese to identify a representative or 'delegate' to 'attend to issues of child abuse'. In fact these delegates have often taken on a wide range of responsibilities in relation to child protection, and are usually known as Child Protection Co-ordinators. We welcome the fact that each diocese has a diocesan Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC). They will need to be appointed by and directly responsible to the bishop, and to have his full confidence and support as well as that of other senior clergy and lay people. They will be responsible for the effective implementation of policies and practice throughout the diocese (including, if necessary, in any lay organisations or communities there may be in the diocese). They will be the principal line of contact with the statutory agencies (social services and the police) and in particular the statutory Area Child Protection Committees. They will themselves be the first line of support for the Parish Child Protection Representatives already recommended.

## The religious order

3.2.6 Members of religious orders will be subject to the policies and arrangements of dioceses to which they are seconded. Nonetheless, if the whole Church in England and Wales is to have a fully effective approach to child protection, it is essential that religious orders, whether or not their work normally brings them into contact with children, also appoint Child Protection Co-ordinators. This is because there can never be a guarantee that members of any religious order will not have contact with children, and their particular status will make that a privileged relationship. These religious order CPCs will take on a comparable role to that of the diocesan CPCs in ensuring

awareness and appropriate systems and arrangements within their religious orders. For many religious orders, particularly the smaller ones, it will be entirely appropriate for them to appoint a CPC jointly. Alternatively, they might prefer, either individually or jointly, to request that the duly appointed diocesan CPC act for them. Where they are different, there needs to be very close liaison between diocesan and religious order Child Protection Co-ordinators.

**Recommendation 8. Each bishop and religious superior should appoint a Child Protection Co-ordinator for the diocese or religious order. Religious orders may, where appropriate, jointly appoint a CPC or request a diocesan CPC to act for them. In the larger dioceses and religious orders the role of Child Protection Co-ordinator is likely to be a full-time responsibility.**

#### **The seminary and other formation houses**

3.2.7 Seminaries and some other formation houses (i.e. institutions where candidates for the priesthood or permanent diaconate are trained) are independent of the diocesan and religious order structure but must not fail to be covered by appropriate arrangements. We recommend that they should appoint CPCs, adopt policies and implement guidelines in the same way as we set out for dioceses. They may wish to request a diocesan or religious order CPC to act for them.

Recommendation 9. Seminaries and other institutions where candidates for the priesthood or permanent diaconate are trained should also appoint Child Protection Co-ordinators and implement child protection arrangements as prescribed in this report for dioceses and religious orders.

#### **The Child Protection Co-ordinator and his/her team**

3.2.8

**Recommendation 10. The Child Protection Co-ordinator and his/her team will**  
**(a) ensure that the diocese (or religious order or seminary) has implemented guidelines, based on Safe From Harm and Working Together, to prevent abuse, and regularly reviews its performance;**  
**(b) help parishes and others in the diocese (or religious order or seminary) apply the guidelines - by giving advice on how to apply them and how to make the necessary contacts and checks, by facilitating training and awareness events, and so on; and**  
**(c) oversee arrangements for responding to allegations and for risk assessment as described in Section 3.3.**

3.2.9 The Child Protection Co-ordinator does not need to be professionally qualified. Nor does she/he necessarily need to be employed full-time on child protection matters, though we believe that in many cases this may be desirable and in some of the larger dioceses and religious orders it will be necessary, at least for the present until fully effective arrangements are in place throughout the diocese or religious order.

**Recommendation 11. The Child Protection Co-ordinator does not need to be a child care professional but he/she must have the time, resources, training and supporting arrangements (including access to professional support) to do the job properly.**

We are aware of arrangements in one part of the country where three dioceses have collaborated to fund a child care professional to support them, especially in the area of training and consistency. This seems to work well, and we commend these cross-diocesan arrangements. They may be particularly useful in more rural parts of the country although we think it important that each diocese has its own CPC. We have also been told of a very successful arrangement in one diocese where a CPC is mentored by a child care expert. We believe that CPCs generally would benefit from such an arrangement.

3.2.10 We also stress that it is essential that very close liaison is maintained between the CPC, the statutory agencies and the statutory Area Child Protection Committees. (Each local social services

authority has an Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) which means that in some dioceses there will be a significant number of ACPCs to deal with; however, the benefit of close working relations is likely to be large.)

**Recommendation 12. The CPC and his/her team should take steps to form and maintain close liaison with the statutory agencies and the statutory Area Child Protection Committees.**

3.2.11 So far CPCs have invariably been priests. As we have said it is most important that they have the full confidence and support of the bishop (or religious superior) and parish priests, but we do not consider it essential that they should be priests themselves. It is also important that CPCs have the confidence of victims, the victims' families and friends, the statutory agencies and the wider community; this will be achieved by appointing the best person for the job without regard for whether they are female or male, clerical or lay.

**Recommendation 13. What matters is that the CPC is the right person for the job irrespective of whether they are clerical or lay, female or male.**

3.2.12 We do not believe that there is a single blue-print for the structures a diocese should have in place under the Co-ordinator. However,

**Recommendation 14. We commend arrangements (based on one diocese) where there is an overarching Child Protection Policy Team having the oversight of further teams focusing on (i) implementation and training, (ii) response to allegations and risk assessment, and (iii) pastoral care.**

The Child Protection Policy Team is chaired by the Co-ordinator, and includes clerical and lay members of the diocese, social services, police and legal representatives and experts on child abuse. An illustrative chart of these arrangements is at Annex E.

3.2.13 So that progress can be seen and reviewed we believe that each CPC should make an annual report to the bishop and diocese (or to the religious superior and order) on actions taken and progress made during the year. These reports should be copied to the National Child Protection Unit (see below).

**Recommendation 15. Each CPC should make an annual report to the bishop (or religious superior) on actions taken and progress made during the year. Copies of these reports should be sent to the National Child Protection Unit.**

#### Nationally

3.2.14 There is at present an annual meeting of the diocesan CPCs but no permanent arrangement at national level. We believe that there is a further essential element of support to parishes and to diocesan and religious order co-ordinators that needs to be put in place. This is a compact national facility, which we call a National Child Protection Unit.

**Recommendation 16. A National Child Protection Unit (NCPU) should be set up. It would advise the Conferences of Bishops and Religious on child protection policies and principles, give expert advice and moral support to dioceses and religious orders, collect and disseminate good practice, hold databases of training facilities and other useful information, and maintain the central confidential database of information (see Recommendation 37). The Unit would liaise with the statutory agencies (including the Criminal Records Bureau) at national level, with professional bodies and leading charities in the field and with other churches.**

**Recommendation 17. The Unit should also collect data, monitor that effective arrangements are implemented in dioceses and religious orders, and seek to secure improvements where necessary.**

The Unit should bring any apparent failure in diocesan or religious order arrangements immediately to the attention of the bishop or religious superior and make regular reports to diocesan bishops and religious superiors on the effectiveness of arrangements in each diocese and order. It should also make annual reports, which should be published, to the Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious on the position overall.

**Recommendation 18. The Unit should make regular reports to diocesan bishops and religious superiors on the effectiveness of arrangements in each diocese and order.**

**Recommendation 19. The Unit should make a public annual report to the Bishops' Conference on the overall position in dioceses, and a public annual report to the Conference of Religious on the position in religious orders.**

3.2.15 Amongst early tasks for the Unit should be the preparation and dissemination of good practice on job descriptions and advice on databases and information gathering, including securing appropriate software.

3.2.16 The right size for the Unit will need to be determined in the light of experience, but we believe that it will need to be headed by a recognised child protection expert (preferably someone with knowledge of the manipulative tactics of offenders and the impact of those on child victims and relevant adults) and to have a small permanent staff and the resources to maintain databases, exercise its monitoring function, procure external advice from time to time, etc. It will need to be properly funded.

3.2.17 The Unit will itself need strong support from the bishops and religious superiors, and we believe that, as with some other central institutions of the Church in England and Wales, it should be separate from the secretariat of the Bishops' Conference, and one of the bishops should have particular responsibility for it. We also believe that the Unit will benefit greatly if it has a standing advisory (or reference) group with which it can consult and discuss issues, and which will include professionals in the field and representatives of the relevant statutory agencies.

**Recommendation 20. The Unit should have a standing advisory (or reference) group with which it can consult and discuss issues, and which will include professionals in the field, representatives of the relevant statutory agencies and other major stakeholders.**

## **Our complete recommendations (*Recommendations 21 to 44*)**

### **Creating an environment that minimises the risk from abuse**

3.3.1 Rigorous arrangements to minimise the risk from abuse are at the heart of our approach. Dealing well with allegations of abuse is very important but the first essential is to ensure and maintain a safe environment for children and those who work with them. Much work has been done by many organisations to develop effective and practical guidelines for working with children. The Home Office publication *Safe From Harm: A Code of Practice for Safeguarding the Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales* (Home Office, 1993), supplemented by their subsequent document *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (Department of Health, Home Office, 1999), remains the best set of guidelines that we know of. It sets out the following 13 statements of principle as a basis for practical action:

#### *Managing the organisation*

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.
2. Plan the work of the organisation to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.

#### *Managing paid staff and volunteers*

4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children.

#### *Choosing the right paid staff and volunteers*

7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children.
9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.

#### *Dealing with abuse*

12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.

#### *Training*

13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

It is clear that these principles were written with secular organisations in mind. However, we believe that they can without significant difficulty be translated into the context of the Church and its work.

**Recommendation 21. The Church should adopt the 13 principles in the Home Office document *Safe From Harm* and policies from *Working Together* as the guiding principles to create a safe environment for children and to keep them safe from harm.**

3.3.2 These principles must be adopted by the Church as a whole, but they can only be given practical expression at diocesan, religious order and parish level. Indeed the parish must be at the heart of implementation for it is at this level that children enter most fully into the life of the Church community. We reiterate that our proposals at other levels of the Church's organisation are essentially to provide structure and support to what happens in the parish. The priest and other clergy are at the centre of that community and we are in no doubt that most of them see it as an integral part of their ministry to ensure a safe, encouraging and loving environment for children. All we say later about the selection of clergy is designed to support and secure that environment.

3.3.3 The rest of this section picks up and discusses issues arising from the 13 principles of *Safe From Harm*.

#### **Managing the organisation to protect children**

*Principle 1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.*

3.3.4 This first principle is covered by our Recommendation 4 (para 3.1.13 above).

*Principle 2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.*

3.3.5 This second principle is a matter of sensible practical arrangements, for example to limit the situations in which a child and an adult might be alone together, or to regulate the circumstances

and arrangements when they are alone where that cannot be avoided. Such arrangements act to protect both children from abuse and priests and other adults from suspicion. It needs to be recognised, of course, that there are many different contexts which need to be provided for from children's catechism and youth clubs to confession and counselling.

3.3.6 Since the First Report, we have been able to look at a range of practical guidance and codes of conduct adopted by various organisations to minimise situations where the abuse of children can occur. There are many examples of good practice (one example of a code is at Annex C and one of guidance on working with children at Annex D) and it is clear that best practice is developing over time. We have therefore concluded that rather than define such material ourselves (which might quite quickly become outdated) it should be part of the NCPU's remit to issue practical guidance on working with children and a code of conduct in line with best practice, and subsequently to keep them under review.

**Recommendation 22. The NCPU should issue recommended codes of conduct and practical guidance on safe working with children, and keep them under review.**

3.3.7 We are also aware that some dioceses have set out a statement to guide children themselves, sometimes called a Declaration of Children's Rights (see para 2.9.3). We think this is of great value. The National Unit should issue guidance on appropriate action to raise the awareness of children.

**Recommendation 23. The National Unit should issue guidance on raising the awareness of children on child protection issues.**

3.3.8 Essentially, however, it is adults who are responsible for protecting children and challenging the behaviour of other adults that may threaten them. For this reason, it is important to raise the awareness of all adults involved with the Church, rather than just workers, about what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and what children's expectations should be. This will make an important contribution to successful child protection. We recommend that guidance issued by the National Unit should cover this aspect.

**Recommendation 24. The guidance issued by the NCPU under Recommendation 22 should cover advice for adults other than workers as to what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and what children's expectations should be.**

3.3.9 The arrangements for the sacrament of reconciliation (confession) for children are one particular aspect of managing the organisation to prevent abuse or even the suspicion of abuse which we have considered further. It is already the case that some priests administer this sacrament in a setting where both priest and lay person can be seen but not heard. We recommend that wherever possible this should be the norm for the confessions of children; other arrangements should be replaced as opportunity allows.

**Recommendation 25. The sacrament of reconciliation (confession) for children should wherever possible be administered in a setting where both priest and child can be seen but not heard.**

*Principle 3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.*

3.3.10 On this third principle we note that the experience in other churches and organisations is that such 'independent persons' are little called on as children prefer to talk to someone they know, or else to use one of the helplines provided by charities. We acknowledge that this may be so but think that such an appointment would nonetheless be worthwhile to complement the other arrangements that concerned children might use. We suggest that these appointments should generally be made by the diocese or religious order. It is important that these 'independent persons' are well trained for their role which is a very sensitive one.

**Recommendation 26. Each diocese should make arrangements either at diocesan or parish level to ensure that there is an independent person for children to talk with. Their contact details, together with contact details for appropriate**

**children's helplines, should be easily available in the parish church and other places where activity with children takes place. Some parishes may wish to appoint their own independent person.**

### **Managing staff and volunteers to protect children**

*Principle 4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.*

3.3.11 In the context of the Church, 'staff and volunteers' must be taken to include the clergy even though their position does not equate to anything in a secular organisation. This fourth principle emphasises that procedures are to apply to everyone who has any appreciable contact with children; there are to be no exceptions. It would be unacceptably invidious to apply procedures to some and not to others. It would also leave those who were in any way exempted at undue risk themselves of being exposed to suspicion. Most people well understand why great care is taken over the employment of teachers and others who work professionally with children. We are confident that volunteer workers with children, in parishes and elsewhere, will accept the need for the procedures we outline, provided that the reasons for them are well explained - namely the protection of children from abuse and of those who work with them from suspicion.

*Principle 5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.*

3.3.12 There are many benefits to an organisation from clear job descriptions and effective supervision, not simply in the area of child protection. Not only does the organisation benefit from thinking through just what it is asking the individual to do, but also everyone benefits from the resulting clarity. Some sample job descriptions are at Annex F, not as models but as examples. In the same way, codes of conduct for the clergy can play a valuable role. We believe that an early task for the National Child Protection Unit should be to prepare a set of models.

**Recommendation 27. For all posts (paid or voluntary) involving work with children there should be clear job descriptions. The National Unit should prepare and circulate model job descriptions for a range of posts.**

*Principle 6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children.*

3.3.13 We particularly believe that active supervision, by which we do not mean day to day invigilation but regular opportunities to review experience and discuss issues, has a very positive part to play, both for lay workers and for clergy.

**Recommendation 28. For all posts (paid or voluntary) involving work with children there should be effective supervision providing an opportunity to review progress and discuss issues.**

### **Choosing staff and volunteers to protect children**

*Principle 7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.*

*Principle 8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children.*

*Principle 9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.*

*Principle 10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.*

*Principle 11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.*

3.3.14 These five principles are of great importance in the creation of a safe environment for children. Neither the Church nor any other organisation can rely on the fact that they know someone as evidence that they are not a potential abuser. Abusers do not have a distinct set of characteristics that can be readily identified; they come from all walks of life and ethnic origins, they may be male or female, old or young. It should also be remembered that there is always risk in employing those who have abused, however long ago it may have been. It is therefore

important that all are checked as thoroughly as is appropriate before being given relevant responsibilities.

3.3.15 This means that applicants should always sign an application form giving in addition to their full name, address and date of birth, details of previous experience (voluntary or paid) of working with children; permission to contact, in writing and in person, at least one person who has experience of their work with children; details of any convictions for criminal offences against children (including any spent convictions); and (in appropriate cases) permission to check for any police criminal record.

**Recommendation 29. Before taking up a post (paid or voluntary) involving work with children, those concerned should complete an application, give references, give details of any relevant previous criminal convictions and agree to a criminal record check.**

3.3.16 Failure on the part of applicants or volunteers to give this information or to agree to checks must, we believe, result in their not being employed or used in work involving children. There should always be an interview covering their experience. References should always be taken up both in writing and, if necessary, informally. Convictions for criminal offences against children should always be checked. Any doubts that may arise should always be pursued. There should always be a probationary period.

**Recommendation 30. Failure to comply with Recommendation 29 must mean that the individual cannot be appointed to the post.**

**Recommendation 31. References must be taken up, and the candidate must be given a personal interview. Any doubts must be pursued.**

**Recommendation 32. On appointment, individuals should serve a probationary period before being confirmed in the post.**

3.3.17 In the past there has sometimes been difficulty for the Church in checking with criminal records or the DfES's List 99. However, the position on criminal record checks is due to change shortly with the establishment of the new Criminal Record Bureau (CRB). We understand that the Bureau will give every assistance to the Church, as to other similar organisations, in conducting checks. Detailed arrangements will need to be discussed between the Church and the CRB but we would expect the Church and relevant Church organisations to be registered with the Bureau and to use its services as a matter of course.

**Recommendation 33. The Church and relevant Church organisations should register with the Criminal Records Bureau and use its services as a matter of course.**

There can be no excuse for employing someone with a known record of abuse. However, unfortunately, the fact that someone does not have a record does not mean that they have not or will not abuse a child and no such conclusion should be drawn from a negative check. This is why the other measures to secure a safe environment for children are so important.

3.3.18 We have considered very carefully how the principles concerning selection should apply to the clergy themselves. Very great care must be taken to ensure as far as is humanly possible that only candidates who are suitable for the responsibilities of ordained ministry are selected, and there must be continuing vigilance and regular assessment of those undergoing training for the priesthood.

**Recommendation 34. Recommendations 29 to 33 should be strictly applied when candidates are being considered for ordination, and those involved in their initial selection and in their continuing formation before ordination should err on the side of caution.**

A number of those who have responded to our consultation have urged that, in addition to the other checks and continuing oversight during their training, candidates should also be the subject of psychological testing. We know that such tests have been adopted in practice by some dioceses. Although psychological tests undoubtedly have their value, we appreciate that they also have their limitations. They may be a useful tool in the hands of selectors but it is important that reliance is not placed on psychological tests to the exclusion of the many other considerations to be taken into account before a candidate is selected for ordained ministry. They can inform decisions but must not direct them.

3.3.19 Under present arrangements Selection Boards make recommendations to the bishop or religious superior. We think it is most important that bishops and religious superiors do not overrule Selection Boards where reservations are expressed about a candidate's suitability for ordination on the grounds of possible risks to children.

**Recommendation 35. Bishops and religious superiors should not overrule Selection Boards where reservations are expressed about a candidate's suitability for ordination on the grounds of possible risks to children.**

3.3.20 We have heard of cases where there has been inadequate sharing of information between one diocese and another, or where those in charge of a candidate's formation in the seminary have not had access to information known to the Selection Board. In some cases, this has produced situations in which children have been exposed to serious harm. While we recognise the need for great sensitivity in the handling of confidential personal information, we regard it as essential that those who are involved in advising on or making decisions about the formation and ordination of candidates should have access to all the necessary information.

**Recommendation 36. It is essential that seminary rectors and others responsible for the formation and ordination of candidates should have access to all the necessary information from the selection process.**

We believe that this would be greatly assisted if there was a single national database about candidates and therefore recommend that the Church should maintain a single national database of information on all applicant candidates for ordained ministry and the permanent diaconate and that decisions should not be made by Selection Boards, bishops or religious superiors without reference to it.

**Recommendation 37. The Church should maintain a single national database of information on all applicant candidates for ordained priesthood, the permanent diaconate, and male and female applicants for the consecrated life, and decisions should not be made by Selection Boards, bishops or religious superiors without reference to it. Successful candidates should continue to be included in the database.**

3.3.21 We have considered whether the scope of the database should be extended to lay workers and volunteers. In principle, there is a good case to do this though it would clearly be a considerable extension of the scope of the database and greatly increase the complexity of maintaining it. Nonetheless, we believe that the National Unit should look at the possibility of this. In any event, we recommend that dioceses and religious orders should themselves maintain records of checks and references on prospective staff and volunteers for the diocese or order, and that other dioceses and orders as necessary consult such records.

**Recommendation 38. Dioceses and religious orders should themselves maintain records of checks and references on prospective staff and volunteers for the diocese or order, and such records should be consulted by other dioceses and orders as necessary.**

3.3.22 We have also considered what should happen in respect of paid workers and volunteers who are already in post. In some cases checks in line with our recommendations will have been undertaken on appointment. Even in those cases there may be a need to bring those checks up to date. And in other cases we recommend that checks be made with the Criminal Records Bureau.

**Recommendation 39. Paid workers and volunteers who are already in posts working with children, and who did not go through our recommended procedures or something like them on appointment, should now give details of any relevant previous criminal convictions and agree to a criminal record check.**

3.3.23 In many organisations, the equivalent selection process to that for priests is undertaken centrally, by a National Selection Board or equivalent. There would clearly be merit, in terms of uniform standards and, so far as child protection is concerned, in the application of the same thorough checking process to all candidates for ordination, if such an approach were to be adopted by the Church. We are, of course, conscious that there are wider considerations in whether such a national structure would be appropriate.

**Recommendation 40. The idea of a National Selection Board for candidates should be considered for adoption if implementation of Recommendations 34 to 37 fails to secure uniformity of approach.**

3.3.24 The Committee's remit and recommendations cover the Church in England and Wales. But, of course, individuals may come to serve in or work for the Church from other countries, and some responsibility will also exist where members of organisations based in England and Wales go to serve elsewhere (e.g. missionaries). We recommend that anyone coming from abroad should be treated as a new applicant. In their case, however, the process may be made more difficult because referees and other information will be at a distance while there may also be relevant cultural differences. Modern communications systems are probably acting to reduce the first difficulty. It is, however, important not to 'make do' with information or assessments that are any less rigorous than would apply to someone in this country.

**Recommendation 41. Candidates from other countries for clerical, lay or voluntary posts should be the subject of the procedures in the preceding recommendations.**

3.3.25 As regards individuals from England and Wales serving elsewhere, the key principles should be that any relevant information requested by the new employer is willingly and candidly provided; and in any event, if there are any relevant concerns, these should be explicitly made known to the new employer even if they are not requested. Where the employer is in fact based in England and Wales (e.g. a religious order) they should follow the same principles as we have recommended for use here.

**Recommendation 42. When individuals from England and Wales go to serve elsewhere, any relevant concerns should be explicitly made known to the new employer even if they are not requested, and in all cases any relevant information requested by the new employer should be willingly and candidly provided. Where the employer is in fact based in England and Wales (e.g. a religious order), they should follow the same principles as we have recommended for use in this country.**

3.3.26 Once a priest or deacon is ordained or a lay worker appointed that is not the end of the matter. As with anyone else, concerns may arise at any time and, of course, data held by the CRB will be constantly updated. Active supervision in accordance with the sixth principle (para 3.3.13 above) will help considerably but we believe that, in addition, on moving to a new post in a different diocese, diocesan clergy, those who belong to religious orders and lay workers should have their position reviewed by the receiving diocese and appropriate action taken if necessary. The success of the operation of the database and these arrangements for review of individuals need to be monitored by the National Child Protection Unit.

**Recommendation 43. On moving to a new post outside the diocese, diocesan clergy, those who belong to religious orders, and lay workers should have their position reviewed and appropriate action taken if necessary.**

## Dealing with abuse

*Principle 12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.*

3.3.27 This is the subject of section 3.5.

## Training

*Principle 13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers and supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.*

3.3.28 As we have explained, policies and guidelines to prevent abuse are of the first importance. They must, however, be complemented by training in skills and awareness both for those such as the Child Protection Co-ordinator or parish representative who have key roles and for leaders in the Church - bishops, priests and other clergy, the religious and lay. Everyone who works with children should receive training for the tasks they are required to undertake. They must, for example, be equipped to identify signs of abuse by others, and be familiar with and able to initiate the Church's own procedures for protecting children. It is also important to make sure that children and their families are themselves aware of the issues and what to do about concerns. Raising awareness, therefore, has a considerable part to play as does the development of skills in planning the work, interviewing applicants and many other aspects, as well as in responding to allegations. Nor is this a once only activity. Skills and awareness need continuing development.

3.3.29 All those with knowledge of the field who have written or talked to us have reinforced our view of the central position that really good awareness raising and training and support arrangements have in contributing to successful child protection. Nor is this simply about formal training by professionals. There is also a key role for the passing on of experience within the Church's communities from those who work with children professionally (teachers, care workers and so on) or have worked with them in a voluntary capacity within the Church for many years to those who are newly becoming involved.

3.3.30 Child Protection Co-ordinators have a particular responsibility for ensuring that appropriate training and action to increase awareness is undertaken and for facilitating it, and the National Child Protection Unit can also play a useful role in disseminating information and facilitating. There are clearly resource implications here but we believe that such training is necessary and that investment in it will pay considerable dividends.

**Recommendation 44. Training and the raising of awareness is a key requirement. Child Protection Co-ordinators have a particular responsibility for ensuring that appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken; the National Unit will have a facilitating role.**

## Our complete recommendations (*Recommendations 45 to 60*)

### Records

3.4.1 The importance of good record keeping in the context of selection, appointment and subsequent checks on individuals (see above) and also in the context of allegations (see below) can hardly be exaggerated. Inadequate records mean uncertainty and confusion about what was done - e.g. whether proper checks were made, allegations and concerns fully investigated, or decisions made on proper evidence by the right people. We have these general recommendations:

**Recommendation 45. As far as possible, records should be made at the time of a check, allegation or other event (so that the memory is fresh and accurate).**

**Recommendation 46. Confidentiality of records should be scrupulously maintained. Information in them should only be released to those in positions of responsibility who have good reason to need it for the protection of children.**

Individuals are, of course, entitled to access to information about themselves, subject to certain statutory exclusions.

**Recommendation 47. Records in relation to individuals and allegations should be kept for a long time - we recommend 100 years as a minimum.**

We recognise that 100 years is a very long time but child abuse frequently comes to light many years after it occurred and it is very desirable, when it does, to be able to access records of the time. This points in particular to not destroying records when individuals die.

## **Responding to allegations of abuse**

3.5.1 In this report we use the term 'disclosure' to describe the situation where a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual, and 'suspicion' for the situation where there is no disclosure but there is concern that abuse may have taken place or be in prospect. There is, therefore, no presumption on our part that abuse has in fact taken place when we talk of a disclosure being made or a suspicion raised. We want to emphasise this because we are aware that the words, particularly 'disclosure', can carry such a connotation. We believe, however, that it would be too unwieldy to be constantly using the phrases 'alleged disclosure' and 'alleged suspicion' and we do not propose to do so. The same applies to 'victim' and 'survivor'.

3.5.2 The 1994 Guidelines were written specifically to address situations where there were disclosures or suspicions of abuse. We have reviewed the arrangements and set out here our thinking about the essential elements of good procedure. Many of them are covered in the 1994 Guidelines and others are already the rule in many dioceses. The 1994 Guidelines do, however, need revision and we recommend that this should be undertaken by the National Child Protection Unit as a priority task.

3.5.3 The 1994 Guidelines require bishops to appoint a 'delegate' to take the lead for the Church in responding to allegations. These 'delegates' have come to be known as Child Protection Co-ordinators (CPCs) and we have already made recommendations (8 to 15) about them. In relation to responding to allegations, their role must be to ensure that arrangements and trained personnel are in place to respond to allegations.

**Recommendation 48. The CPC must ensure that arrangements and trained personnel are in place to respond to allegations.**

3.5.4 In order to respond effectively to allegations every diocese and religious order must have a properly composed Child Protection Management Team (CPMT) to deal effectively with any reports or incidents. The CPMT should work closely with the statutory agencies (social services and the police). We believe that the CPC would normally chair this Team and that it should include child care professionals, a lawyer, a communications officer, a lay person and a priest. Other expert members may be appropriate in particular circumstances. In addition it will sometimes be necessary to undertake assessments (see 3.5.14) of the immediate danger to children and to recommend appropriate action. The CPMT will need to ensure that this is done to a high standard. We do not envisage that members of the CPMT will be paid except for the reimbursement of legitimate expenses.

**Recommendation 49. Every diocese and religious order must have a properly composed Child Protection Management Team to deal effectively with any reports or incidents.**

**Recommendation 50. The CPC should normally chair the Child Protection Management Team, which should include suitably trained child care professionals, a solicitor, a communications officer, a lay person and a priest. Other expert members may be appropriate in particular circumstances.**

3.5.5 The Child Protection Management Team needs to meet at least quarterly so that its members can speak with confidence and monitor the overall diocesan or religious order strategy in respect of child protection issues. The task of the Team needs to be clearly defined and care taken to

ensure that it does not usurp the work of strategy meetings which are normally convened and chaired by statutory workers. The CPMT's tasks include advising and supporting the CPC, assisting with decision making, hearing what action has been taken in response to disclosures or suspicions, ensuring that the statutory agencies are involved with appropriate speed, receiving information on steps taken to remove paid or lay workers, or a priest, from post while enquiries are made, and satisfying themselves that arrangements are made to safeguard the interests of children. They have a particularly important role when concerns are expressed but no court proceedings are likely and may advise on the steps to be taken in order to assess risk and the subsequent management of the person accused. Even in these cases, the advice and involvement of the statutory services should always be considered.

**Recommendation 51. The Child Protection Management Team should meet at least quarterly. Its tasks include advising and supporting the CPC, assisting with decision making, hearing what action has been taken in response to disclosures or suspicions, ensuring that the statutory agencies are involved with appropriate speed, receiving information on steps taken to remove paid or lay workers, or a priest, from post while enquiries are made, and satisfying themselves that arrangements are made to safeguard the interests of children.**

#### Receipt of an allegation

3.5.6 An allegation is most likely to surface either through a victim making a disclosure or a third party reporting a suspicion. Such disclosures or suspicions may be made to a priest or other member of the Church, to an 'independent person' (see Recommendation 26), or to a helpline, the local social services or police. It seems to us that the following points would constitute best practice:

**Recommendation 52. Disclosures and suspicions should always be investigated and acted on swiftly. The Paramountcy Principle (that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in proceedings concerning children) applies.**

**Recommendation 53. Anybody who receives a disclosure should advise the maker of it to share it with the statutory agencies and the CPC as soon as possible and should support him or her in doing so, especially if the maker of the disclosure is a child. The person receiving the disclosure should him/herself share it with the statutory agencies and the CPC if he/she believes that it will not otherwise be shared with them.**

**Recommendation 54. Anybody who receives a suspicion should advise the reporter of it to share it at least with the CPC and should support him or her in doing so, especially if the reporter of the suspicion is a child. The CPC will arrange for an initial assessment and bring in the statutory agencies as necessary. The person receiving the suspicion should him/herself share it with the CPC if he/she believes that it will not otherwise be shared with them.**

**Recommendation 55. The person receiving the disclosure or suspicion (or the CPC) should write to the person who has made the disclosure or reported the suspicion setting out the advice they gave and providing information about contact addresses, etc. Where the person who raised the concern is a child or vulnerable adult particular care will be needed about how, and sometimes about whether, this is done.**

**Recommendation 56. When information about a disclosure or suspicion is received by the CPC, she/he should write to the person who raised the concern to indicate how the matter will be dealt with and to give an estimate of how long it may take. Subsequently they should be kept informed about what is being done, subject to legal constraints and appropriate confidentiality; in the case of a disclosure such action will be a matter for the statutory agencies. Where the person who raised the concern is a child or vulnerable adult particular care will be needed about how, and sometimes about whether, this is done.**

**Recommendation 57. In due course the National Unit should issue guidance on best practice timescales for follow up action on disclosures and suspicions.**

**Recommendation 58. Any information offered 'in confidence' (unless it is the confidentiality of the confessional which is absolute) should be received on the basis that it will be shared with the CPC and, if appropriate, the statutory agencies.**

**Recommendation 59. Otherwise careful confidentiality should be observed and information only be shared on the basis of a strict 'need to know'.**

It is particularly important that the alleged abuser is not alerted at this stage.

3.5.7 We know that many cases do not present themselves straightforwardly. For example, a recipient might be told that the victim only wants a personal apology and does not want the statutory agencies to be informed. The recipient, however, must consider that other children may be at risk, and this may be so even if the disclosure is of abuse that took place some years before. In such a case we believe that the statutory agencies must be informed.

3.5.8 Or the approach may be through a third party in which case every effort should be made to establish dialogue directly between the victim and a trained professional.

3.5.9 Or the person bringing an allegation forward may insist on absolute confidentiality as a condition of sharing information. It is most important to make it clear from the beginning that confidentiality must be refused if the information to be given relates to matters which might have to be referred to the statutory agencies or the Church's child protection machinery. Otherwise, there are considerable risks involved in receiving information on this basis, both to individuals who may be exposed to abuse so long as the information cannot be shared and to the recipient of the information who may be put in an impossible position. For these reasons we believe that the recipient should make every effort to convince the bringer of the information that such absolute confidentiality is in no one's best interests. But if they cannot so convince them then we believe that the confidentiality must be refused.

#### **False allegations**

3.5.10 Most concerns are raised in good faith and have some foundation. This is well supported by the evidence concerning cases in the Church. Nonetheless it is also important to recognise that false, even malicious, allegations of abuse are sometimes made and that they can have very destructive effects on those concerned. This makes it important both that alleged abusers are given proper support while an initial process of discernment is taking place, and that appropriate action is taken to reinstate individuals quickly when allegations are found to be false. Appropriate action should be taken to hold the makers of malicious allegations to account.

#### **Whistle blowing**

3.5.11 In other settings the concept of the whistle blower (i.e. a member of an organisation who wishes to report on concerns about that organisation or the actions of people within it) has proved useful. In the context of the Church a 'whistle blower' might be defined as a priest, lay worker or volunteer who has and reports concerns about another member of the organisation. Such people may well feel considerable anxiety in raising and reporting concerns. These anxieties are likely to be greater if they believe that people of high standing in the Church are involved, or that their concern may not be acted on or that their own position may be put at risk. They need to have confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted on appropriately.

3.5.12 We intend that the procedures we have set out for making and handling allegations should be capable of use by members of the Church and that they should be reassured that no blame or suspicion of having 'let the side down' will be attached to them. Rather the contrary. This is therefore a crucial cultural issue for the Church: to make it clear in all work on training and awareness in this field that members of the Church who bring forward concerns are acting in the interests of the Church (and should be so regarded by all other members of the Church, not just

the authorities), that they will be treated with respect, have their concerns taken seriously and have absolutely nothing to fear in regard to their own position. In particular, there should be reassurance that taking concerns directly to the statutory authorities is a perfectly acceptable thing to do.

3.5.13 This is easier said than done. Our proposals for responding to allegations of abuse are, in management speak, 'off-line', i.e. they do not assume that the priest or bishop, or a lay manager if there is one, should be the first port of call. Concerned individuals can go to the 'independent person' for the diocese or parish, to the CPC or, indeed, to any individual they trust. We can see, however, that in some circumstances those with concerns may still be anxious. So we recommend that in addition, they should be able to approach the Head of the NCPU or named members of the NCPU's advisory group (see Recommendation 20). In addition:

**Recommendation 60. The NCPU should draw up a policy on whistle blowing in the context of concerns about child abuse.**

## **Our complete recommendations (*Recommendations 61 to 83*)**

### **Risk assessment**

3.5.14 We use the term 'risk assessment' to cover both an initial process of discernment about whether there is cause for concern and a thorough technical assessment of the risk posed by a person to children now and in the future. The links that we have recommended CPCs and Child Protection Teams should establish with the local statutory Area Child Protection Committees are important here. They should enable protocols to be established in this area and ensure regular co-operation and exchange of views. We would expect that:

(a) when there is a disclosure, the statutory authorities should be brought in straight away, without any process of filtering, to take the lead in investigating and assessing the situation. There is no need in these circumstances for an assessment initiated by the CPMT.

(b) where there is only a suspicion, there is a need for an initial assessment to be made simply to discern whether there are concerns that should be acted on. (We emphasise the wide spectrum of cases that may arise, such as abusive language, a person behaving inappropriately with young people, a veiled accusation half-hinted at and then denied.) If there are any concerns, then the statutory authorities should be brought in as in (a). They will be able to make a considered assessment based on all the relevant information that they have (and which might include information about the alleged victim, about the discloser, if it was someone other than the victim, and about the alleged perpetrator).

(c) later, after an allegation has been investigated, the case may be dropped or the alleged perpetrator found not guilty even though concerns remain. In these circumstances, a thorough risk assessment should be made. Desirably this assessment will be undertaken with the statutory authorities, or at least with the benefit of relevant evidence collected by them in the course of their investigations. The outcome of this risk assessment should always be acted on to ensure that a person is not placed in any role that might put children at risk. So far as possible the subject of the assessment should normally be informed of its outcome face to face.

**Recommendation 61. When there is a disclosure, the statutory authorities should be brought in straight away, without any process of filtering, to take the lead in investigating and assessing the situation.**

**Recommendation 62. When there is or was only a suspicion, the CPC should arrange for an initial assessment to be made to discern simply whether there are concerns that should be acted upon. If there are any such concerns, then the statutory authorities should be brought in as in Recommendation 61.**

**Recommendation 63. After an allegation has been investigated, the case may be dropped or the alleged perpetrator found not guilty. In these cases, a thorough risk assessment should be made. Desirably this assessment will be undertaken with the statutory authorities, or at least with the benefit of relevant evidence collected by them in the course of their investigations. The outcome of this risk assessment should always be acted on so that a person is not placed in any role that might put children at risk.**

**Recommendation 64. The subject of a risk assessment should normally be informed of its outcome face to face.**

### **Suspension**

3.5.15 Following the initial risk assessment the person against whom allegations have been made may need to be withdrawn from any contact with the child(ren) concerned or possibly any other child. This removes risk to the child, allows the investigation to proceed and safeguards the rights of the alleged abuser. The initiative within the Church should lie with the CPC and his team acting on the advice of the statutory agencies in appropriate cases.

**Recommendation 65. Where judged necessary by the police, social services, or the CPC and his/her Team**

- volunteers should be required to withdraw from any church situation involving children until investigations are complete;
- any person employed by the Church should be required to take leave from their duties on full pay until investigations are complete.

### **Administrative leave for clergy**

3.5.16 We can see no grounds for treating clergy differently from lay people in this respect. The importance of removing risk to the child, allowing the investigation to proceed and safeguarding the rights of the clergy is just as great. Our clear view is therefore that, on the recommendation of the CPC and his/her Team, following consultation with social services and the police, any priest or deacon should be required to take administrative leave (the nearest equivalent for a priest of suspension for a secular employee) at a location to be determined by the bishop. We are aware that 'administrative leave' is provided for in canon law within the context of a judicial trial initiated by the Church. But we underline the necessity for the Church to have satisfactory administrative procedures to achieve the withdrawal of the priest or deacon from contact with children in those circumstances where a judicial procedure has not been, or cannot be, initiated by the Church. It is well understood in professions such as teaching that suspension in these circumstances does not imply guilt.

**Recommendation 66. On the recommendation of the CPC and his/her Team following consultation with social services and the police, any priest or deacon should be required to take administrative leave at a location to be determined by the bishop or religious superior.**

### **Allegations against a bishop or religious superior**

3.5.17 If the concerns or allegations are about the bishop or religious superior him/herself, similar procedures should be followed. In the case of a bishop, the CPC will need to keep the Papal Nuncio closely informed. The CPC may also like to request support from the National Child Protection Unit or from the CPC of another diocese. If administrative leave is appropriate, we believe that it must apply to a bishop or religious superior as to any other priest. We invite bishops and religious superiors to signify their consent to such arrangements.

**Recommendation 67. If the concerns or allegations are about the bishop or religious superior him/herself, similar procedures should be followed. We invite bishops and religious superiors to signify their consent to such arrangements.**

## **Allegations against those involved with child protection**

3.5.18 The fundamental principle is that no-one should have any part in the handling of allegations concerning themselves, and every effort should be made to ensure that they do not even hear of any such allegations prematurely. It follows that the maker or recipient of an allegation about a CPC should refer the case to the bishop or religious superior (rather than to the CPC) who will arrange for it to be handled by the CPC and team of another diocese or order.

3.5.19 Similarly there may be an allegation against a member of the Child Protection Policy or Management Team. The person making/reporting the allegation will not necessarily know who these people are so what we suggest in this case is that when the CPC is informed of the allegation (as we have suggested for the general case) he/she will ensure that it is assessed and handled by the CPC and team of another diocese or order.

**Recommendation 68. If the concerns or allegations are about the CPC, they should be reported to the bishop or religious superior who will arrange for them to be handled by the CPC and Team of another diocese or religious order. Allegations about members of the child protection teams should also be handled by the CPC and team of another diocese or religious order.**

## **Historical allegations**

3.5.20 It is sometimes suggested that cases where the allegation is of abuse that took place some years ago can be handled differently, and by implication with less urgency or rigour, from those that are current. We do not take this view. The evidence is that those who have abused in the past may still represent considerable risks in the present. It is for this reason important to treat such allegations in the same way as current allegations.

3.5.21 By extension, it is our view that there may be current risks arising from cases in the past that are known to the Church but, in the then state of knowledge about child abuse, were not acted on or not acted on fully at the time. We conclude that bishops and religious superiors should ensure that all such cases are the subject of an assessment as soon as possible, and that there is appropriate follow-up action including possibly regular continuing assessment.

**Recommendation 69. It is important to treat current allegations about abuse that took place some years ago ('historical allegations') in exactly the same way as allegations of current abuse.**

**Recommendation 70. Bishops and religious superiors should ensure that any cases which were known of in the past but not acted on satisfactorily ('historic cases') should be the subject of review as soon as possible, reported to the statutory authorities wherever appropriate, and that there is appropriate follow-up action including possibly regular continuing assessment.**

## **Support for the victim**

3.5.22 A number of the responses to our consultation have suggested that the Church could and must do more, following an allegation of abuse, to give support to the victim and his/her family. Clearly an event of abuse or a decision to disclose one is a very difficult time for victims and their families. We have no doubt, having regard to the Church's mission, that it should provide all available help.

3.5.23 We believe the most helpful approach would be to make a 'support person' available to those who have, or may have, suffered abuse and their families. Such a person would be, first and foremost, a focal point for the victim and his/her family to turn to for help and advice. They could assist those wishing to make a complaint, facilitate them in gaining access to information and other more specialised help, and represent their concerns on an ongoing basis. (The family liaison officers now being developed and used by the Metropolitan Police may be a helpful parallel.) They must, above all, be acceptable to the victim and his/her family while also, once appointed, being completely independent of the CPC and his/her Team. It may be that they would often not be

called on (because victims may well prefer to turn to others outside the Church to take on this role). Nonetheless, it seems desirable that such a person should be available if wanted and we so recommend. The CPC should be responsible for ensuring that they are available, and for appropriate training.

3.5.24 One further and substantial point has been made to us about support. The need for victims/survivors to be given support may last for very many years and is not simply something for the weeks or months after disclosure. We agree with this and believe the Church should do whatever it can to support and foster the development of support services to meet the needs, including the spiritual needs, of survivors and their families. The National Unit should compile and maintain a database of such services.

**Recommendation 71. A 'support person' should be available to those who have, or may have, suffered abuse and their families, to assist them in making a complaint, to facilitate them in gaining access to information and other more specialised help, and to represent their concerns on an ongoing basis.**

**Recommendation 72. Support may continue to be needed long after the allegation has been dealt with. The Church should do whatever it can to support and foster the development of support services to meet the needs, including the spiritual needs, of survivors and their families. The National Unit should compile and maintain a database of such services.**

#### **Support for the parish**

3.5.25 The parish where allegations arise can also need special support. If the alleged abuser is a worker for the Church the priest will be able to support his congregation though he may need help in doing so. But if the priest is himself the accused, then quite apart from whatever interim arrangements are made for the ministry of the Church in the parish, it seems sensible that the bishop should also make arrangements to help the parish cope with the situation in which they find themselves. This has happened in some recent cases and we recommend that it should become the general practice.

**Recommendation 73. The bishop should provide appropriate support to help parishes cope where there are allegations against the priest or a parish worker.**

#### **Support for the alleged abuser**

3.5.26 It does not in any way detract from the general principles set out in this report to bear in mind that the alleged abuser is also entitled to proper support and advice. The Paramountcy Principle requires that the welfare of the child must be the first priority. For that very reason someone who may not have been charged with, and certainly has not been convicted of, any offence, may find themselves suspended from their job and, in the case of a priest, quite possibly removed from their home and any kind of support. The Church is fundamentally concerned to seek justice for all and we are clear that in these circumstances it would be good practice to appoint a 'support person' to be available to those (whether priest, paid staff or volunteer) against whom allegations are made. They would provide advice, ensure legal representation if necessary and look to any accommodation or other needs. As with the victim support, though for different reasons, such a person, once appointed, must be completely separate from the CPC and his Team. The CPC should, however, be responsible for ensuring that people are available to fulfil this role and that they too receive appropriate training.

**Recommendation 74. A 'support person' should be available to those (whether clergy, paid staff or volunteer) against whom allegations are made, to provide advice, to ensure legal representation if necessary, to look to any accommodation or other needs, and to advise on other sources of help.**

**Recommendation 75. The CPC should be responsible for ensuring the appointment of people to provide support to victims and alleged abusers and for overseeing that they receive appropriate training, but they should operate**

**completely independently of the CPC and his/her team in relation to particular cases.**

3.5.27 While the Church has responsibilities towards its members, clerical or lay, who may be accused of abuse which has led to the recommendation in the previous paragraph, we consider it most important that the Church neither acts nor appears to act on their behalf. It would, for example, be completely inappropriate if the solicitor acting for the alleged abuser was also acting for the diocese or religious order.

**Recommendation 76. A person against whom allegations are made should not be legally represented by the solicitor who is representing the diocese or religious order.**

#### **Abusers who have been convicted or cautioned**

3.5.28 The Committee is aware that some other churches and many secular organisations have adopted the principle that a person who has been cautioned or convicted of a serious offence against children should no longer be allowed to hold any position that could possibly put children at risk again. The Committee believes, in accordance with the Paramountcy Principle, that the Church should adopt and implement a similar principle. Implementation will, however, need to be done in a way that accords with the structures and processes of the Church. So far as lay workers are concerned, the position of the Church is substantially the same as that of many other organisations. The position of clergy is more difficult. Most posts to which priests might be appointed are likely to involve some contact with children. Nonetheless, the general principle needs to apply in their case too.

**Recommendation 77. As a general rule, clergy and lay workers who have been cautioned or convicted of an offence against children should not be allowed to hold any position that could possibly put children at risk again. The bishop or religious superior should justify any exceptions to this approach publicly (for example, by means of a letter to be read out in churches at Mass).**

3.5.29 Many argue that laicisation (dismissal from the clerical state) is an appropriate penalty whenever clergy are convicted or cautioned of a child abuse offence. However, laicisation is the most serious perpetual penalty that can be imposed by the Church. Normally it can be imposed only after a formal judicial process involving a collegiate tribunal of three judges. Furthermore it can be argued that clergy can be much better supervised if they remain as clergy than if they are laicised (because it is argued that in the latter case the Church will have no further relationship with them, and no role in their supervision).

3.5.30 Our view is that laicisation is an extreme step which is not always appropriate. Our report covers the whole range of child abuse, not only sexual abuse, and laicisation will not be a proportionate response in every case. We believe that the principle to be applied is that laicisation should be considered appropriate where (in the words of a comparable decided case) 'all right thinking members of the public, knowing all the facts, would feel that justice has not been done by any other course'. We suggest, therefore, that if a priest or deacon is convicted of a criminal offence against children and is sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment of 12 months or more (note that this is a slight modification of the recommendation in our First Report - see para 2.10.21 above), then it would normally be right to initiate the process of laicisation. The period of 12 months is the minimum period adopted by statute for the compulsory disqualification of adult offenders from working with children (The Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000, section 28(4)). We say 'initiate' because we are aware that laicisation (except by consent) is the decision of a tribunal at the end of a legal process. We also appreciate that in cases where the events took place some years ago the normal canon law process would not be available because of the statute of limitations. However, we understand that even such cases can be taken forward by reference to the Holy See.

3.5.31 We do not mean to imply by this, however, that laicisation is never appropriate for a lesser sentence. For example, an abuser may have a number of shorter sentences or cautions and laicisation may be appropriate in such cases. The judgement about initiating laicisation must turn on the facts of particular cases.

3.5.32 We should add that laicisation does not mean that the Church has no further part to play in relation to the abuser. As with lay worker abusers who are no longer employed by the Church, the Church may nonetheless be able to assist with the rehabilitation and pastoral needs of the individual.

**Recommendation 78. If a bishop, priest or deacon is convicted of a criminal offence against children and is sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment of 12 months or more, then it would normally be right to initiate the process of laicisation. Failure to do so would need to be justified. Initiation of the process of laicisation may also be appropriate in other circumstances.**

3.5.33 The Church can also 'suspend' a priest or deacon, or declare him 'impeded', from the exercise of his orders. These penalties can only be applied for a period and whilst the underlying reason for imposing the penalty continues to exist. We believe these are certainly appropriate penalties for any conviction or caution for a child abuse offence, particularly in less serious cases.

**Recommendation 79. 'Suspending' a priest, or declaring him 'impeded', will usually be an appropriate penalty for a conviction or caution for a child abuse offence.**

## **Mistakes and lapses**

3.6.1 Even with a culture of vigilance, mistakes will be made. Examples might include a failure to take up references correctly, being alone with a child when this should not have occurred or failure to report/pursue an allegation. It is important that mistakes are not ignored or covered up. They should be corrected wherever possible and lessons learnt. Our view is that mistakes should be acknowledged (publicly if necessary), recorded, reported (as appropriate) and rectified wherever possible. If the mistake indicates that systems need to be changed, then that should be done.

3.6.2 In this connection it is important that the culture should be one of encouraging people to admit mistakes so that someone who has made a mistake will not feel inhibited from acknowledging it and handling it in the right way. Training will undoubtedly have a significant part to play. So will good supervision and mentoring. Inevitably, consistently making mistakes will suggest that an individual cannot cope with their responsibilities; these may need to be changed to ensure that children are adequately protected.

**Recommendation 80. Mistakes and lapses should be acknowledged (publicly if necessary), recorded, reported (as appropriate) and rectified wherever possible. If the mistake indicates that systems need to be changed, then that should be done.**

## **Child abusers in the congregation**

3.7.1 Comprehensive proposals for child protection in the Church need to include policies with respect to child abusers who are intent on not re-offending and are present in the congregation but not in positions of responsibility. The Church will want to minister to such individuals but it will also be necessary to establish clear boundaries for the protection of the young and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse. Some other churches address this issue by drawing up a form of agreement with the involvement of the abuser, key personnel in the parish and statutory workers (including the probation officer, if any). We recommend this for the Church. Such an agreement could cover

- the risks posed to the Church and young people and how they should be managed
- how those in the parish who 'need to know' can best respond in order to help the abuser in their efforts not to repeat their abusive behaviour
- the level and kind of involvement in parish activities that is considered safe and acceptable, and how to monitor it
- what to do if the agreement is not adhered to.

**Recommendation 81. The National Unit should prepare and issue guidance on arrangements to enable the safe participation of former child abusers in the life of the Church.**

## **Child abuse in the community**

3.8.1 We have concentrated in our reports, as we were asked to do, on preventing abuse by clergy, lay workers and volunteers and responding to allegations of abuse by them. But most abuse takes place in the family or in other contexts outside the Church (see para 3.1.2). The raising of awareness among both adults and children which we recommend will have a wider value in helping to prevent abuse in the community. But members of the Church also need to know that when they hear of disclosures or suspicions, or have suspicions themselves, unconnected with church workers, they should report them immediately to the local authority social services or police.

## **A wide understanding**

3.9.1 We emphasise the importance of everyone in the Church understanding what is being done and why. For that reason we lay stress on a culture of vigilance: raising awareness and making information available in a simple and accessible form. We do not underestimate how difficult this is.

**Recommendation 82. A brief user-friendly leaflet should be prepared by the NCPU for wide distribution within parishes explaining the policies and practices that the Church has put in place.**

## **Further review**

3.10.1 Finally, all experience tells us that knowledge about child abuse, how to prevent it and how to respond to allegations will continue to grow and best practice to develop. The arrangements we propose should themselves enable the Church to keep its practice up to date but we also recommend a more in depth review after five years.

**Recommendation 83. These recommendations should be reviewed after five years.**

## **Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

4.1 We have been greatly struck in our work by the eagerness of so many within the Church to move as fast as possible to a situation where the Church can be an example to all in the way that it nurtures and protects children. We have been similarly struck by the willingness of other organisations in the field, statutory and voluntary, to help as much as they can. This leads us to believe that the Church has a tremendous opportunity to move forward and this report is designed to help it do that by setting out the principles and actions that we believe reflect current best practice, and by implementing which the Church will achieve that end. We believe that the Church can become an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse, and that it has the will to do so.

4.2 The structure of the Church means that formal responsibility for action lies primarily with individual bishops and superiors of religious orders. We are confident that this need create no difficulty provided that the whole Church in England and Wales and the individual bishops and superiors commit themselves wholeheartedly to the programme we have set out. The key requirements are summarised in our first three recommendations:

**Recommendation 1. The Catholic Church in England and Wales should be an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse, and in responding to it.**

**Recommendation 2. The top priority is to have preventative policies and practices operating effectively in parishes, dioceses and religious orders that will minimise the opportunity for abuse.**

**Recommendation 3. The whole Church in England and Wales and the individual bishops and religious superiors should commit themselves to:**

- **a single set of policies, principles and practices based on the Paramountcy Principle and the 13 principles of Safe From Harm, and the revised Working Together guidelines;**
- **effective and speedy implementation in parishes, dioceses and religious orders, including a programme to raise awareness and train those involved in implementing child protection policies;**
- **an organisational structure in the parish, supported by the Child Protection Co-ordinator and his/her Teams at the diocese and in religious orders;**
- **a national capability (the National Child Protection Unit) which will advise dioceses and orders, co-ordinate where necessary, and monitor and report on progress; and**
- **the provision of adequate resources to support these arrangements.**

Diversity of policy and practice, insufficiency of resources and a lack of national support and co-ordination will, in our view, lead to a weakened, inconsistent and inadequate response.

4.3 We finish with the same message as we gave in our First Report. We are aware that the overall impression of this report is highly prescriptive. Faced with the many problems concerning child protection, we see the need for, and have made, very specific recommendations. However, we are aware of the inevitable limitations of such a prescriptive approach. The fact is that should every parish throughout England and Wales follow our recommendations the problem of child abuse would not thereby be eradicated. But our hope is that this report will help to bring about a culture of vigilance where every single adult member of the Church consciously and actively takes responsibility for creating a safe environment for children. Our recommendations are not a substitute for this but we hope they will be an impetus towards such an achievement.

## **Summary of recommendations**

4.4 The rest of this chapter contains a summary list of our recommendations. The reasoning behind them has been set out, in context, in Chapter Three.

1. The Catholic Church in England and Wales should be an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse, and in responding to it. (3.1.7)
2. The top priority is to have preventative policies and practices operating effectively in parishes, dioceses and religious orders that will minimise the opportunity for abuse. (3.1.8)
3. The whole Church in England and Wales and the individual bishops and religious superiors should commit themselves to
  - a single set of policies, principles and practices based on the Paramountcy Principle, the 13 principles of Safe From Harm, and the revised Working Together guidelines;
  - effective and speedy implementation in parishes, dioceses and religious orders, including a comprehensive programme to raise awareness and train those involved in implementing child protection policies;
  - an organisational structure in the parish, supported by the Child Protection Co-ordinator and his/her Teams at the diocese and in religious orders;
  - a national capability (the National Child Protection Unit) which will advise dioceses and orders, co-ordinate where necessary, and monitor and report on progress; and
  - the provision of adequate resources to support these arrangements. (3.1.12)

## Policy statement

4. The Church should adopt this policy statement:

The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of children towards whom it has a special responsibility and a duty of care. The Church, and individual members of it, undertake to do all in their power to create a safe environment for children and to prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The Church authorities will liaise closely with statutory agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly and properly dealt with, victims supported and perpetrators held to account. (3.1.13)

## Organisation

### *In the parish*

5. A lay Parish Child Protection Representative (PCPR) should be appointed in every parish and have these general responsibilities: to ensure
  - that diocesan policies and procedures are known and followed,
  - that awareness is raised, and
  - that principles are worked through into everyday practice. (3.2.3)
6. The PCPR should be appointed by the diocesan Child Protection Co-ordinator (see below) after appropriate consultation in the parish. (3.2.3)
7. PCPRs within each deanery should meet together regularly to provide each other with mutual support and help. (3.2.4)

### *In the diocese and religious order*

8. Each bishop and religious superior should appoint a Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) for the diocese or religious order. Religious orders may, where appropriate, jointly appoint a CPC or they may request a diocesan CPC to act for them. In the larger dioceses and religious orders the role of CPC is likely to be a full-time responsibility. (3.2.6)

### *In seminaries and other training institutions*

9. Seminaries and other institutions where candidates for the priesthood or permanent diaconate are trained should also appoint Child Protection Co-ordinators and implement child protection arrangements as prescribed in this report for dioceses or religious orders. (3.2.7)
10. The Child Protection Co-ordinator and his/her team will
  - (a) ensure that the diocese (or religious order or seminary) has implemented the national policies, principles and practices through guidelines based on Safe From Harm and Working Together to prevent abuse, and regularly reviews its performance;
  - (b) help parishes and others in the diocese (or religious order or seminary) apply the guidelines - by giving advice on how to apply them and how to make the necessary contacts and checks, by facilitating training and awareness events, and so on; and
  - (c) oversee arrangements for responding to allegations and for risk assessment. (3.2.8)
11. The CPC does not need to be a child care professional but he/she must have the time, resources, training and supporting arrangements (including access to professional support) to do the job properly. (3.2.9)
12. The CPC and his/her team should take steps to form and maintain close liaison with the statutory agencies and the statutory Area Child Protection Committees. (3.2.10)
13. What matters is that the CPC is the right person for the job irrespective of whether they are clerical or lay, female or male. (3.2.11)
14. We commend arrangements (based on one diocese) where there is an overarching Child Protection Policy Team having the oversight of further teams focusing on (i) implementation and training, (ii) response to allegations and risk assessment, and (iii) pastoral care. (3.2.12)
15. Each CPC should make an annual report to the bishop (or religious superior) on actions taken and progress made during the year. Copies of these reports should be sent to the National Child Protection Unit. (3.2.13)

## Nationally

16. A National Child Protection Unit (NCPU) should be set up. It would advise the Conferences of Bishops and Religious on child protection policies and principles, give expert advice and moral support to dioceses and religious orders, collect and disseminate good practice, hold databases of training facilities and other useful information, and maintain the central confidential database of information (see Recommendation 37). The Unit would liaise with the statutory agencies (including the Criminal Records Bureau) at national level, with professional bodies and leading charities in the field and with other churches. (3.2.14)
17. The Unit should also collect data, monitor that effective arrangements are implemented in dioceses and religious orders, and seek to secure improvements where necessary. (3.2.14)
18. The Unit should make regular reports to diocesan bishops and religious superiors on the effectiveness of arrangements in each diocese and order. (3.2.14)
19. The Unit should make a public annual report to the Bishops' Conference on the overall position in dioceses, and a public annual report to the Conference of Religious on the position in religious orders. (3.2.14)
20. The Unit should have a standing advisory (or reference) group with which it can consult and discuss issues, and which will include professionals in the field, representatives of the relevant statutory agencies and other major stakeholders. (3.2.17)

NOTE: Other recommendations for the National Child Protection Unit are at numbers 22, 23, 24, 27, 44, 57, 60, 72, 81 and 82.

## Creating a safe environment

21. The Church should adopt the 13 principles in the Home Office document Safe From Harm and policies from Working Together as the guiding principles to create a safe environment for children and to keep them Safe From Harm. (3.3.1)
22. The NCPU should issue recommended codes of conduct and practical guidance on safe working with children, and keep them under review. (3.3.6)
23. The National Unit should issue guidance on raising the awareness of children on child protection issues. (3.3.7)
24. The guidance issued by the NCPU under Recommendation 22 should cover advice for adults other than workers as to what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and what children's expectations should be. (3.3.8)
25. The sacrament of reconciliation (confession) for children should wherever possible be administered in a setting where both priest and child can be seen but not heard. (3.3.9)
26. Each diocese should make arrangements either at diocesan or parish level to ensure that there is an independent person for children to talk with. Their contact details, together with contact details for appropriate children's helplines, should be easily available in the parish church and other places where activity with children takes place. Some parishes may wish to appoint their own independent person. (3.3.10)
27. For all posts (paid or voluntary) involving work with children there should be clear job descriptions. The National Unit should prepare and circulate model job descriptions for a range of posts. (3.3.12)
28. For all posts (paid or voluntary) involving work with children there should be effective supervision providing an opportunity to review progress and discuss issues. (3.3.13)

## Selection and appointment

29. Before taking up a post (paid or voluntary) involving work with children, those concerned should complete an application, give references, give details of any relevant previous criminal convictions and agree to a criminal record check. (3.3.15)
30. Failure to comply with Recommendation 29 must mean that the individual cannot be appointed to the post. (3.3.16)
31. References must be taken up, and the candidate must be given a personal interview. Any doubts must be pursued. (3.3.16)
32. On appointment, individuals should serve a probationary period before being confirmed in the post. (3.3.16)
33. The Church and relevant Church organisations should register with the Criminal Records Bureau and use its services as a matter of course. (3.3.17)

34. Recommendations 29 to 33 should be strictly applied when candidates are being considered for ordination, and those involved in their initial selection and in their continuing formation before ordination should err on the side of caution. (3.3.18)
35. Bishops and religious superiors should not overrule Selection Boards where reservations are expressed about a candidate's suitability for ordination on the grounds of possible risks to children. (3.3.19)
36. It is essential that seminary rectors and others responsible for the formation and ordination of candidates should have access to all the necessary information from the selection process. (3.3.20)
37. The Church should maintain a single national database of information on all applicant candidates for ordained priesthood, the permanent diaconate, and male and female applicants for the consecrated life, and decisions should not be made by Selection Boards, bishops or religious superiors without reference to it. Successful candidates should continue to be included in the database. (3.3.20)
38. Dioceses and religious orders should themselves maintain records of checks and references on prospective staff and volunteers for the diocese or order, and such records should be consulted by other dioceses and orders as necessary. (3.3.21)
39. Paid workers and volunteers who are already in posts working with children, and who did not go through our recommended procedures or something like them on appointment, should now give details of any relevant previous criminal convictions and agree to a criminal record check. (3.3.22)
40. The idea of a National Selection Board for candidates should be considered for adoption if implementation of Recommendations 34 to 37 fails to secure uniformity of approach. (3.3.23)
41. Candidates from other countries for clerical, lay or voluntary posts should be the subject of the procedures in the preceding recommendations. (3.3.24)
42. When individuals from England and Wales go to serve elsewhere, any relevant concerns should be explicitly made known to the new employer even if they are not requested, and in all cases any relevant information requested by the new employer should be willingly and candidly provided. Where the employer is in fact based in England and Wales (e.g. a religious order), they should follow the same principles as we have recommended for use in this country. (3.3.25)

#### *Review*

43. On moving to a new post outside the diocese, diocesan clergy, those who belong to religious orders, and lay workers should have their position reviewed and appropriate action taken if necessary. (3.3.26)

#### *Training and awareness*

44. Training and the raising of awareness is a key requirement. Child Protection Co-ordinators have a particular responsibility for ensuring that appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken; the National Unit will have a facilitating role. (3.3.30)

#### *Records*

45. As far as possible, records should be made at the time of a check, allegation or other event (so that the memory is fresh and accurate). (3.4.1)
46. Confidentiality of records should be scrupulously maintained. Information in them should only be released to those in positions of responsibility who have good reason to need it for the protection of children. (3.4.1)
47. Records in relation to individuals and allegations should be kept for a long time - we recommend 100 years as a minimum. (3.4.1)

### **Responding to allegations**

#### *Structures*

48. The CPC must ensure that arrangements and trained personnel are in place to respond to allegations. (3.5.3)

49. Every diocese and religious order must have a properly composed Child Protection Management Team to deal effectively with any reports or incidents. (3.5.4)
50. The CPC should normally chair the Child Protection Management Team, which should include suitably trained child care professionals, a solicitor, a communications officer, a lay person and a priest. Other expert members may be appropriate in particular circumstances. (3.5.4)
51. The Child Protection Management Team should meet at least quarterly. Its tasks include advising and supporting the CPC, assisting with decision making, hearing what action has been taken in response to disclosures or suspicions, ensuring that the statutory agencies are involved with appropriate speed, receiving information on steps taken to remove paid or lay workers, or a priest, from post while enquiries are made, and satisfying themselves that arrangements are made to safeguard the interests of children. (3.5.5)

*Disclosures and suspicions*

52. Disclosures and suspicions should always be acted on swiftly. The Paramountcy Principle (that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in proceedings concerning children) applies. (3.5.6)
53. Anybody who receives a disclosure should advise the maker of it to share it with the statutory agencies and the CPC as soon as possible and should support him or her in doing so, especially if the maker of the disclosure is a child. The person receiving the disclosure should him/herself share it with the statutory agencies and the CPC if he/she believes that it will not otherwise be shared with them. (3.5.6)
54. Anybody who receives a suspicion should advise the reporter of it to share it at least with the CPC and should support him or her in doing so, especially if the reporter of the suspicion is a child. The CPC will arrange for an initial assessment and bring in the statutory agencies as necessary. The person receiving the suspicion should him/herself share it with the CPC if he/she believes that it will not otherwise be shared with them. (3.5.6)
55. The person receiving the disclosure or suspicion (or the CPC) should write to the person who has made the disclosure or reported the suspicion setting out the advice they gave and providing information about contact addresses, etc. Where the person who raised the concern is a child or vulnerable adult particular care will be needed about how, and sometimes about whether, this is done. (3.5.6)
56. When information about a disclosure or suspicion is received by the CPC, she/he should write to the person who raised the concern to indicate how the matter will be dealt with and to give an estimate of how long it may take. Subsequently they should be kept informed about what is being done, subject to legal constraints and appropriate confidentiality; in the case of a disclosure such action will be a matter for the statutory agencies. Where the person who raised the concern is a child or vulnerable adult particular care will be needed about how, and sometimes about whether, this is done. (3.5.6)
57. In due course the National Unit should issue guidance on best practice timescales for follow up action on disclosures and suspicions. (3.5.6)
58. Any information offered 'in confidence' (unless it is the confidentiality of the confessional which is absolute) should be received on the basis that it will be shared with the CPC and, if appropriate, the statutory agencies. (3.5.6)
59. Otherwise careful confidentiality should be observed and information only be shared on the basis of a strict 'need to know'. (3.5.6)
60. The NCPU should draw up a policy on whistle blowing in the context of concerns about child abuse. (3.5.13)

*Risk assessment*

61. When there is a disclosure, the statutory authorities should be brought in straight away, without any process of filtering, to take the lead in investigating and assessing the situation. (3.5.14)
62. When there is or was only a suspicion, the CPC should arrange for an initial assessment to be made to discern simply whether there are concerns that should be acted upon. If there are any such concerns, then the statutory authorities should be brought in as in Recommendation 61. (3.5.14)
63. After an allegation has been investigated, the case may be dropped or the alleged perpetrator found not guilty. In these cases, a thorough risk assessment should be made.

Desirably this assessment will be undertaken with the statutory authorities, or at least with the benefit of relevant evidence collected by them in the course of their investigations. The outcome of this risk assessment should always be acted on so that a person is not placed in any role that might put children at risk. (3.5.14)

64. The subject of a risk assessment should normally be informed of its outcome face to face. (3.5.14)

#### *Withdrawal and leave*

65. Where judged necessary by the police, social services, or the CPC and his/her Team
- volunteers should be required to withdraw from any church situation involving children until investigations are complete;
  - any person employed by the Church should be required to take leave from their duties on full pay until investigations are complete. (3.5.15)
66. On the recommendation of the CPC and his/her Team following consultation with social services and the police, any priest or deacon should be required to take administrative leave at a location to be determined by the bishop or religious superior. (3.5.16)
67. If the concerns or allegations are about the bishop or religious superior him/herself, similar procedures should be followed. We invite bishops and religious superiors to signify their consent to such arrangements. (3.5.17)
68. If the concerns or allegations are about the CPC, they should be reported to the bishop or religious superior who will arrange for them to be handled by the CPC and Team of another diocese or religious order. Allegations about members of the child protection teams should also be handled by the CPC and team of another diocese or religious order. (3.5.19)

#### *Past events*

69. It is important to treat current allegations about abuse that took place some years ago ('historical allegations') in exactly the same way as allegations of current abuse. (3.5.21)
70. Bishops and religious superiors should ensure that any cases which were known of in the past but not acted on satisfactorily ('historic cases') should be the subject of review as soon as possible, reported to the statutory authorities wherever appropriate, and that there is appropriate follow-up action including possibly regular continuing assessment. (3.5.21)

#### *Support for those involved*

71. A 'support person' should be available to those who have, or may have, suffered abuse and their families, to assist them in making a complaint, to facilitate them in gaining access to information and other more specialised help, and to represent their concerns on an ongoing basis. (3.5.24)
72. Support may continue to be needed long after the allegation has been dealt with. The Church should do whatever it can to support and foster the development of support services to meet the needs, including the spiritual needs, of survivors and their families. The National Unit should compile and maintain a database of such services. (3.5.24)
73. The bishop should provide appropriate support to help parishes cope where there are allegations against the priest or a parish worker. (3.5.25)
74. A 'support person' should be available to those (whether clergy, paid staff or volunteer) against whom allegations are made, to provide advice, to ensure legal representation if necessary, to look to any accommodation or other needs, and to advise on other sources of help. (3.5.26)
75. The CPC should be responsible for ensuring the appointment of people to provide support to victims and alleged abusers and for overseeing that they receive appropriate training, but they should operate completely independently of the CPC and his/her team in relation to particular cases. (3.5.26)
76. A person against whom allegations are made should not be legally represented by the solicitor who is representing the diocese or religious order. (3.5.27)

77. As a general rule, clergy and lay workers who have been cautioned or convicted of an offence against children should not be allowed to hold any position that could possibly put children at risk again. The bishop or religious superior should justify any exceptions to this approach publicly (for example, by means of a letter to be read out in churches at Mass). (3.5.28)
78. If a bishop, priest or deacon is convicted of a criminal offence against children and is sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment of 12 months or more, then it would normally be right to initiate the process of laicisation. Failure to do so would need to be justified. Initiation of the process of laicisation may also be appropriate in other circumstances. (3.5.32)
79. 'Suspending' a priest, or declaring him 'impeded', will usually be an appropriate penalty for a conviction or caution for a child abuse offence. (3.5.33)

### **Mistakes and lapses**

80. Mistakes and lapses should be acknowledged (publicly if necessary), recorded, reported (as appropriate) and rectified wherever possible. If the mistake indicates that systems need to be changed, then that should be done. (3.6.2)

### **Child abusers in the congregation**

81. The National Unit should prepare and issue guidance on arrangements to enable the safe participation of former child abusers in the life of the Church. (3.7.1)

### **A wide understanding**

82. A brief user-friendly leaflet should be prepared by the NCPU for wide distribution within parishes explaining the policies and practices that the Church has put in place. (3.9.1)

### **Further review**

83. These recommendations should be reviewed after five years. (3.10.1)

## **Annex A - Glossary**

### **The following definitions apply in this report.**

**1994 Guidelines** - a working party report Child Abuse: Pastoral and Procedural Guidelines, produced for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 1994, and subsequently implemented in dioceses.

**Abuse of children** - the ill-treatment and/or exploitation of a child or young person whether through neglect or through physical, emotional or sexual molestation.

**ACPC** - see Area Child Protection Committee.

**Administrative leave** - the procedure used by many professions and recommended in the 1994 Guidelines whereby a priest accused of abuse steps aside, without any implication of guilt, from his responsibilities including any parish commitment while the investigation takes place.

**Allegation** - the reporting of a disclosure of or suspicion about abuse.

**Area Child Protection Committee** - a multi-agency statutory body that exists in each part of the country to co-ordinate the agency responses to child protection issues.

**Canon law** - the law of the Church.

**Child/children** - includes young people up to the age of eighteen.

**Church** - the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

**Clergy** - bishops, priests and deacons.

**CPC** - Child Protection Co-ordinator. This is a person (also known as the 'bishop's delegate' in the 1994 Guidelines) appointed in each diocese by the bishop to take the lead for the Church in responding to allegations and also to co-ordinate the development of child protection policies, and in each religious order by the religious superior for the same purpose.

**CPMT** - Child Protection Management Team (see para 3.5.4ff). This is a body to be set up in each diocese, which includes childcare professionals, a lawyer and other experts. Its function is to deal effectively with any reports or incidents and to liaise with the statutory agencies.

**CRB** - Criminal Records Bureau. A new body established by statute due to become operational in 2001, to provide police information on past convictions or suspicions.

**Deanery** - a group of parishes in the same geographical area within a diocese.

**DfES** - the Department for Education and Skills.

**Diaconate** - the sacred office of men who have received the sacrament of ordination and assist bishops and priests in the threefold service of the liturgy, preaching the gospel and works of charity. See below for permanent deacon.

**Diocese** - normally a geographical area where the local Catholic community is grouped together under a bishop. The Catholic Church in England and Wales is divided into 22 dioceses. Each diocesan bishop exercises his authority autonomously though not in a totally independent manner. He must act in accordance with the norms of canon law, and in communion with the world-wide college of bishops and with its head, the Pope. In the United Kingdom there is also the Bishopric of the Forces which is not territorial and covers those serving in the armed forces.

**Disclosure** - a situation where a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual.

**Formation** - the process of educating and spiritually developing those training for the priesthood or religious life.

**Holy See** - the Pope himself and/or the various officials and bodies of the Church's central administration at Vatican City which act in the name and by authority of the Pope.

**Laicisation** - the consequence of a priest either successfully applying to be relieved from their priestly obligations, or the result of their dismissal from the clerical state by due process.

**NCPU** - National Child Protection Unit.

**Ordination** - the sacramental act by which a person becomes a deacon, priest, or bishop.

**Papal Nuncio** - the ambassador of the Holy See to the Court of St James, and a key link between the bishops of England and Wales and the Vatican's Secretariat of State.

**Paramountcy Principle** - the principle that in any proceedings involving children the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration.

**PCPR** - Parish Child Protection Representative (see paras 3.2.3-4).

**Permanent deacon** - a man, married or unmarried, who has been ordained to the diaconate (see above) without a view to being subsequently ordained to the priesthood.

**Religious order** - a religious community, either male or female, which has its own specific rule and constitutions. In general the diocesan bishop has no capacity to intervene in their internal affairs (see paragraph 3.1.11).

**Religious superior** - the person in charge of a specific community of a religious order.

**Risk assessment** - the process of judging whether a person or situation presents a degree of risk to a child or children (see paragraphs 2.10.10 and 3.5.14).

**Seminary** - the college where students for ordination are trained.

**Statutory agencies** - police, social services, and other agencies set up by statute.

**Superior** - see religious superior.

**Survivor** - see victim.

**Suspension** - for lay people, this is the equivalent of administrative leave; for priests and deacons this is the penalty available under the canon law of the Church which debars a priest from exercising his priestly ministry for a limited period (see paragraph 3.5.33).

**Suspicion** - a situation where there is no disclosure but there is a concern that abuse may have taken place.

**Victim** - a person who has suffered abuse at any time in the past (adults who were victims of abuse as children often describe themselves as 'survivors' rather than 'victims'.)

## **Annex B - Organisations we have Seen**

Action Against False Allegations of Abuse (AAFAA)

Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS)

British False Memory Society (BFMS)

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Catholic Child Welfare Council

Catholic Children's Society

Catholic Education Service

Catholic Independent Schools' Conference

Catholic Media Office/Catholic Communications Centre

Catholic Youth Services

Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse/Minister And Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (CSSA/MACSAS)

Conference of Religious in England and Wales

Diocesan Child Protection Co-ordinators

Falsely Accused Carers and Teachers (FACT)

Judicial Vicar of Westminster Diocese and Trustee of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

The Rectors of Seminaries in England and Wales (represented by the Rector of Ushaw)

Union of Monastic Superiors

## **Annex C - Example of a Code of Conduct**

You must

- treat all children and young people with respect
- provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- be aware that even physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted
- recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- operate within the Church's principles and guidance and any particular procedures of the diocese, parish, order or club
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse
- provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have

You must not

- have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- show favouritism to any individual
- rely on your good name or that of the Church to protect you
- believe 'it could never happen to me'
- take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach

You should give guidance and support to inexperienced helpers

## **Annex D - Example of Guidance on Working with Children**

Any physical contact should only take place in public.

Physical contact should reflect the child's needs, not the adult's.

Physical contact should be age appropriate, and initiated by the child, not the adult.

Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult, or the child.

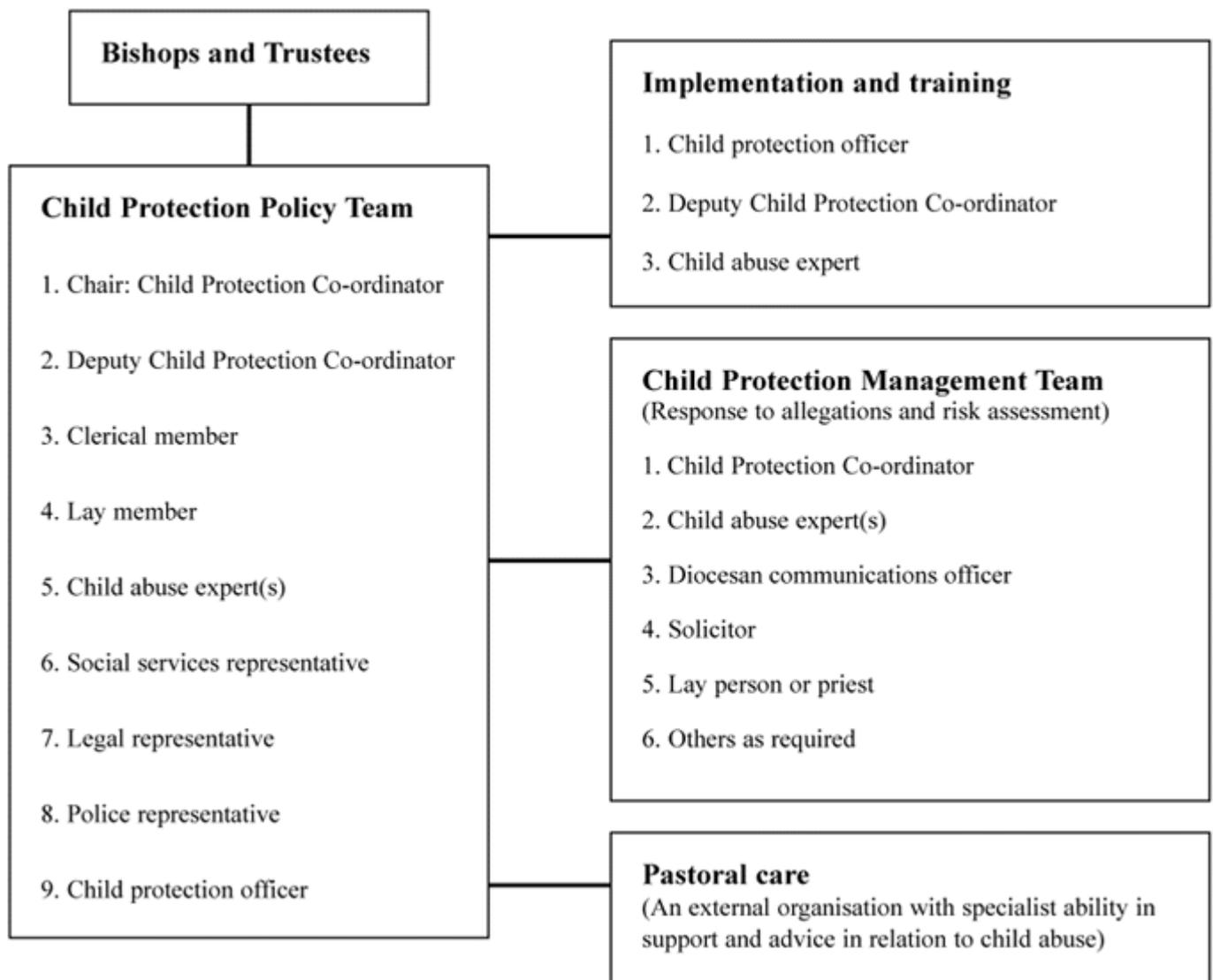
Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others (except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention).

Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should feel able to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood.

If an adult persists in inappropriate touch with a young person this must be challenged. If there are concerns about an adult's contact with a young person, advice must be sought.

## **Annex E- Possible Arrangements at Diocesan Level**

### **CHILD PROTECTION AT THE DIOCESAN LEVEL - POSSIBLE STRUCTURE**



## Annex F - Example of Job Descriptions

DIOCESE OF ..... / PARISH OF .....

**Job Title:** Children's Liturgy Group Worker for [age group]

**Responsible to:** [designated person for the parish or leader for that group]

**Job Purpose:** To work with Pre-school and Primary School children to provide an adapted Liturgy of the Word for them during Mass on Sundays and Major Feasts.

### Main Responsibilities

- To work with others to form and inform a children's liturgy group with regular planning meetings.
- To arrange for the parents of the children, and the parish community, to be informed of the aim and content of the liturgy group.
- To prepare the venue and to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and to conduct the Celebration of the Word with them.
- To liaise with the priest presiding at the parish Liturgy and any other appropriate ministers.
- To provide the necessary books and equipment with the support of the parish.
- To ensure that the Children's Liturgy is conducted in accordance with the Diocesan Child Protection Procedures.
- To monitor good practice and implement changes where necessary to enhance both the quality of the Liturgy and the safety of children.

### Person specification

- The ability to relate with respect and ease to children and adults, and to enjoy working with children.
- Commitment to the essential teachings of the Catholic Church, and the ethos of the parish.
- Experience in talking with young children and willingness to attend Children's Liturgy Days.
- A willingness to give time to the preparation of the sessions and the co-ordination of the group.
- All volunteers responsible for the group must be over 18 years of age.

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DIOCESE OF ..... / PARISH OF .....

**Job Title:** Parish M.C./Co-ordinator of Altar Servers [age group]

**Responsible to:** [designated person for the parish or leader for that group]

**Job Purpose:** To work with the Altar Servers in the parish, assisting at Mass and other Liturgies; and recruiting and training new servers.

### Main Responsibilities

- To work with servers and others to ensure the availability of servers to assist at the Liturgy as required.
- To liaise with the priest and other appropriate ministers presiding at the Liturgy.
- To ensure the physical safety and well-being of the children and young people serving.

- To encourage new servers and provide appropriate training.
- To ensure proper facilities are available for the servers.
- To arrange, in consultation with others, social events for servers.
- To ensure that the ministry of the servers is conducted in accordance with the Diocesan Child Protection Procedures.
- To monitor good practice and implement changes where necessary to enhance both the quality of the Liturgy and the safety of children.

**Person specification**

- The ability to relate with respect and ease to children and adults, and to enjoy working with children.
- Commitment to the essential teachings of the Catholic Church, and the ethos of the parish.
- An understanding of the purpose and forms of the Church's Liturgy and an openness to the diversity possible within the Liturgy.
- A willingness to give time to training of servers in a patient yet cheerful atmosphere.
- All volunteers responsible for the group must be over 18 years of age.

**DIOCESE OF ..... / PARISH OF .....**

**Job Title:** Volunteer Parish Youth Worker/Minister

**Responsible to:** [designated person for the parish]

**Job Purpose:** Using social education and spiritual development activities to work with young people from secondary school age upwards.

**Main Responsibilities**

- To encourage young people, mainly from the parish community, to become active within the group and community.
- To establish a programme of activities which respond to the needs and aspirations of the young people.
- To contribute, as part of the parish youth work team, to the development of work with young people from the parish, promoting the spiritual, social and fun aspects of Christian living.
- To assist in the maintenance of administration and the good financial running of the group.
- To attend the team programme planning and assessment meetings.
- To enable young people to take their rightful role in the Christian Community as ministers of change and growth within the Church and World.
- When necessary, to act as a liaison between young people and the adult parish, to be a voice for their hopes and aspirations.
- To work with others to ensure that youth work is conducted in accordance with the Diocesan Child Protection Procedures.

**Person specification**

- Commitment to the Catholic/Christian principles of the parish group.
- Willingness to undertake training (within the first twelve months).
- Ability to relate well with young people and to adults.
- Commitment to the physical, spiritual, and emotional well being of all children and young people, especially those they will come in contact with.
- All volunteers must be over 18 years of age.