

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES POLICY: CHILD PROTECTION

ROLE OF LOCAL CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVE

11

11.1 INTRODUCTION

- 11.1.1 The role of the Local Child Protection Representative derives from recommendations from "A Programme for Action", a Report by Lord Nolan, published in September 2001. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and the Conference of Religious of England & Wales have accepted the Report in its entirety and all Parishes and Religious Communities are now asked to implement its recommendations.

N.B. THIS ROLE IS SUBJECT TO A CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU CHECK AT ENHANCED LEVEL

11.2 A LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE

- 11.2.1 "A Programme for Action" recommended that all parishes and Religious Congregations should identify someone from within their communities who would have special responsibility for promoting good and safe child care practice in all activities involving children and young people.
- 11.2.2 In practice this person may be someone who has special skills or experience of working with children – a parent, a grandparent, a foster carer, teacher, nursery worker, youth worker, or anyone who cares about standards of childcare within their parish or religious community. Representatives will be people of integrity; they will be respected in their parishes and will be able to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- 11.2.3 Each parish/religious community will nominate to their CPC/CPO a suitable individual, or individuals. The selection process will be undertaken in accordance with national policy, including a CRB Disclosure at Enhanced Level. Appointments will be approved by the CPC/CPO and endorsed by the appropriate Child Protection Commission. They will be initially be appointed for a six-month trial before confirmation by the Child Protection Commission, and thereafter for three years in line with the CRB policy for review and re-check.
- 11.2.4 Parishes should consider carefully possible conflicts of interest in this role for nominees who already have an active role in working with children and young people in the Parish concerned. The person appointed must be able to recognise any such conflicts of interest as and when they arise (for example, dealing with an allegation or concern within the group they participate in as a volunteer), and report them to the CPC/CPO.
- 11.2.5 In some Parishes/Religious Communities several people may share the role of local representative or operate as a team. Where the responsibilities of the representatives are shared there should be a clearly appointed Local Child Protection Representative who holds responsibility for the task carried out and undertakes confidential roles such as identity verification for CRB checks.

11.3 WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE ROLE?

- 11.3.1 The person selected will be responsible for ensuring that parishes and local communities are aware of the importance of protecting children and what is involved in promoting good and safe practice, which will include basic concepts of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

- 11.3.2 They will have, or be prepared to develop, good communication links throughout the Parish/Religious Community and will be, or prepared to become familiar with, the various activities in which children are involved.
- 11.3.3 They will be expected to maintain regular communication with their Child Protection Co-ordinator or Officer
- 11.3.4 They will be expected to become familiar with National/Diocesan/Order policies and procedures and be willing to be part of a Deanery group working to promote their implementation locally.
- 11.3.5 With the local Parish Priest and in conjunction with the CPC/CPO, they will agree how to administer the application process for Parish volunteers working with children, including the Criminal Record Bureau check, in line with national policy and procedures.
- 11.3.6 They will be willing to be involved from time to time in support, development and training groups and to pass on information and learning from those groups.

11.4 IN ADDITION THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE WILL:

- 11.4.1 Act as a central point for concerns to be shared, recorded confidentially, and passed immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator or Child Protection Officer for the Diocese or Religious Congregation.
- 11.4.2 Adults may express such concerns but, more importantly, there should be easy access to the Local Representative by children themselves. The Local Representative should ensure that information about children's Helplines and Church Child Protection policies should be readily available where there are activities with children and that such information should be presented in 'child friendly' language using appropriate child centred illustrations.

11.5 SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

- 11.5.1 This will be available from the Child Protection Co-ordinator, Child Protection Officer, Parish Priest, the Parish Church Council, and other Local Representatives through Deanery Meetings, and informal contact with other Local Representatives.
- 11.5.2 In practice it is advisable for clear local support arrangements to be established within the Parish or local Community that are acceptable and appropriate for the individuals concerned and are approved by the appropriate Child Protection Commission.

11.6 BASIC TRAINING FOR LOCAL CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVES

- 11.6.1 Induction in the national strategy for Child Protection ("A Programme for Action")
- 11.6.2 Introduction to the inter-agency and legal framework of Child Protection work – how the statutory agencies work
- 11.6.3 Induction in Church structures and systems relating to Child Protection
 - the policy framework – where does the Local CP Representative fit in?
 - Where to get help
 - Effective steps to prevention at local level – creating a safe environment
 - How to handle allegations & concerns
 - Knowledge of available resources (Childline, etc)

- Contributing to the local Annual Report which will be fed into the Diocesan Annual Report
- The CRB process for disclosures – the role of the Local CP Rep
- An understanding of the barriers to disclosure and the sources and implications of institutional powers and personal authority within the church context

11.6.4 The signs impact and dynamics of child abuse

11.6.5 How offenders operate – how to minimise risk locally

11.6.6 Interviewing & assessment skills (appointment of volunteers)

11.6.7 Administration systems, recording and report writing