

## Section 5

# Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse

This section contains specific guidance on how to deal with situations involving those who may present a risk to children and young people in a parish context.

This section is especially relevant to the clergy and other leaders in the parish, e.g. churchwardens.

The Area Child Protection inter-agency framework and procedures provide a protocol for advising and supporting other organizations and groups. It reinforces the need for the Diocese to have these procedures in place.

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## 5.1 Introduction

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Research has indicated that a higher proportion of convicted offenders against children may be found in church congregations than in the population generally<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore probable that many congregations will have people who have abused children amongst their worshippers, some of whom will be known. Not all will have committed sexual offences; some will have been guilty of neglect, physical or emotional abuse. The Church's duty to minister to all imposes a particular responsibility to such people. This must not, however, compromise the safety of children. If a congregation is generally aware of how offenders will be treated, it will be easier to deal confidentially with a specific case if it should occur.

While this section relates specifically to those who perpetrated child sexual abuse, we need to note that:

As well as people with convictions against children, there are others whose position in a congregation may need to be carefully and sensitively considered to decide whether they pose a risk to children. These would include people convicted of violent or sexual offences against adults, including domestic violence, people involved in drug or alcohol addiction, adults with a mental disorder or special needs which might in rare cases result in erratic behaviour.

House of Bishops' Policy 2004

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## 5.2 Procedures

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### Procedures

How does the Church respond to the perpetrators of abuse? The Church *can be a refuge* for those who have perpetrated this abuse and who indicate they want to change, but it can also become a *haven* which provides opportunities for perpetrators to continue their abusive pattern of behaving. Thus it is in the interests of child protection that the Church addresses how it responds to the perpetrators of abuse.

This Policy seeks to address how these tensions should be managed within a parish and addresses how to respond when:

- a perpetrator seeks to join the parish
- a perpetrator is already a member of the congregation
- a perpetrator leaves the parish
- suspicion and/or rumours come to light within the parish.

In this Policy, we are "*to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before our God*". We believe that these words are the building blocks of this work, providing a sure foundation and a guiding light as we face this challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished research by Donald Findlater, Lucy Faithful Foundation

## 5.3 The perpetrators

### Who are the perpetrators?

Those who sexually abuse children come from all walks of life. It is not helpful to assume that there is only one particular type of person who would abuse.

It is known that most perpetrators are male. This should not, however, blind us to allegations made by people abused by females. On the whole, the problem should be addressed as one of male abuse of power.

For many years, ignorance about sexual abuse has meant a tendency to stereotype perpetrators as those coming from a particular sort of socio-geographical setting, professional group or social standing, and with certain specific obvious personal characteristics.

So who are the perpetrators? Any attempts at definitions are thwarted by the need to avoid suggesting that one type of perpetrator may be more dangerous than another. Further, there is still too little known in research and theory about how best to define perpetrators in a way that is helpful at a practical level.

It is easy to think that anyone who sexually abuses is a paedophile. This is not so. Paedophilia is often seen as a condition which is characterized in the main by a 'fixation' on the need to abuse children.

It is now clear that paedophiles are extremely skilled at creating opportunities to target and groom children, and if necessary will change their job, address and/or general lifestyle to be able to do so.

Paedophiles are more likely to abuse large numbers of children because of their extreme sexual interest in them, and may not necessarily confine themselves to specific gender, age or characteristics of children.

There are others, however, who would not be defined as paedophile because, perhaps, their abuse is more child-specific, particularly within the home, and their involvement in sexual abuse not as widespread. Such people can be just as dangerous, and the process of assessment and decision-making to consider the risk they present should be as thorough as for anyone else.

It must always be remembered that a child may still be at risk from the spouse/partner (including family and friends) of an abuser since they might have allowed the abuse to continue unchecked or may have directly or indirectly condoned the abuse (eg, a parent starting a relationship with an abuser but ignoring the risk the abuser poses to the children in the family).

### Why does this happen?

We need to understand that abuse does not just happen; it is carefully and meticulously planned, sometimes over a very long period of time.

It may be helpful to have an understanding of abuse as a cycle, which helps us to accept how secretive, addictive, dangerous and entrenched abusing behaviour is.

Professionals who work with perpetrators have identified common features among them. These are men whose self esteem is very low and who expect rejection from others. Often they will have poor social skills. Some may have experienced a trauma in their lives; a

divorce, a bereavement, a redundancy, which may leave them feeling very bad about themselves. As a result of these factors, such men can withdraw from involvement with others, thus becoming emotionally isolated.

Men who become perpetrators often compensate for their isolation, low self esteem and personal unhappiness by developing relationships with children, which is likely to lead to sexual abuse.

It is perhaps more critical to be aware of *what* the perpetrator does in order to fully understand the complexities and dilemmas in seeking to protect children from harm.

### How does this happen?

For the abusive act to take place, the perpetrator has to overcome what Finklehorn describes as his "internal inhibitors". In other words, he has to convince himself that what he wants to do is not wrong; he has to quieten the voice of his conscience, persuade himself that no harm will be done. Perpetrators can become adept at rationalizing their behaviour. This is described as "cognitive distortion" by those who work with them.

To commit the abuse, the perpetrator identifies a child(ren) who is attractive to him. Often, but not always, this child may have low self esteem, be vulnerable, perhaps a little isolated. Initially, the perpetrator will fantasize about the child. These fantasies are often reinforced by using pornographic literature and magazines containing photographs of children.

Simultaneously, the perpetrator will plan how to get to know the child. To achieve this, the perpetrator has to overcome the "external inhibitors", those factors which make it difficult for him to get close to his victim, e.g. the child's parents, social networks, the rules and regulations that ensure those who work with children are properly appointed, the procedures which ensure adult leaders are not on their own with children.

A perpetrator may therefore attempt to get to know those children where there are fewer obstacles to him having contact with them.

To get close to the child, the perpetrator will try to find ways to gain the child's trust. This is described as the 'grooming process'. He may gain trust by being attentive and loving, offering treats, giving the message to the child that they are 'special'. Thus, for a vulnerable, insecure child, the perpetrator becomes attractive and likeable as the child thrives on this attention.

To start the abuse, the perpetrator has to overcome the child's resistance. The more control he has gained over the child, the easier this is to do. He may emphasize to the child that the sexual activity is a way of them showing their love for each other. He may point out that as the child is aroused, they must want the activity to continue. He may suggest that the child has enjoyed it and really the child has invited him to do this.

Following the abuse, the child is left with such feelings as confusion, guilt, shame, betrayal, loss, fear.

The perpetrator may promise not to do it again, even say he is sorry for what happened. To ensure protection for himself he will need to encourage the child not to tell anyone. There are many ways in which he will attempt to gain the child's agreement to the secrecy, e.g. by bribery, by threats – "this would mean I'll go to prison", "your mum and I will split up", by implying it was the child's fault – "you wanted it", "you didn't make me stop".

Any initial guilt a perpetrator experiences tends to pass away. The perpetrator's capacity for minimizing the full extent of his abusive behaviour means that he denies to himself the impact of what he has done. He may attempt to justify his behaviour, admitting it but denying

responsibility for it. This justification results in his blaming others' actions and his wife, his drinking, stress at work, his overdeveloped sex drive.

Thus by not taking responsibility for his behaviour and the impact on his victim, he can convince himself that no real harm has been done, and start the cycle all over again.

### Intervention and risk management

Abusive behaviour becomes entrenched with repetition. It is helpful in our understanding to liken it to compulsive addictive behaviours, for example misuse of alcohol, drugs, gambling.

Perpetrators rarely give up abusing. This is one of the truths so grim that we do not want to hear it. It is more hopeful to believe that a few months of therapy will change the person, and they can be reunited to be a 'happy family'. Children pay the price of this belief. This is why we need to manage the risk.

We can fail to address the plight of perpetrators. We should not underestimate the demand that we make of the perpetrator to give up his main source of delight, forswear the company of children, and lead a grey and bleak existence. However, in admitting the difficulty, we must never fall into the trap of minimizing the harm done.

Given all this, we do need to accept some responsibility for providing structures in our churches to help those perpetrators who want to stop.

In her proposal for how to support a perpetrator effectively, Heggen gives the following guideline: "To work effectively and redemptively with offenders in the congregation, the church must reaffirm its belief in the power of the resurrection, and the possibility of new life in Christ for both offender and offended".

To support a perpetrator, we need to be prepared:

- a. for the extent and tenacity of their denial of their behaviour and its impact.
- b. to recognize that religious conversions are common among convicted perpetrators. It is problematic to distinguish authentic conversions from these religious conversions, whose primary goal is the evasion of treatment for sexual abuse.

Salter's (1988) observation is that "the difference lies in whether or not the person sees his new experience with God as empowering him to change his behaviour through treatment – or eliminating the need for treatment".

It is clear that where a perpetrator sincerely seeks to change his behaviour, the support of people around him who understand what is involved is vital. Thus there is a role for clergy and others in his congregation to help him on his journey to a life where he does not abuse.

#### References:

- Cashman, Hilary - *Christianity and Child Sexual Abuse*
- Heggen, Carolyn Holderread - *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches*
- Salter, A C - *Treating Child Sex Offenders and Victims: A Practical Guide*
- Parkinson, Patrick - *Child Sexual Abuse and the Church*

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## **5.4 The legal position**

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### **The Children Act 1989**

The Children Act states that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration for all organizations providing services for children. A child is defined as up to 18 years. The Children Act also places greater emphasis on inter-agency co-operation, with clearer local guidelines and procedures for effecting this. The responsibility for establishing these is delegated to local Area Child Protection Committees soon to become known as Local Safeguarding Boards. Area Child Protection Committees relevant to the area in which parishes are situated have comprehensive procedures to ensure that children are protected from abuse and the risk of abuse. One section refers to the action required by "voluntary community organizations".

Such an organization is defined as a group *"involved in a wide range of community support and development activities with varying amounts of direct contact with service users. Some are actively involved in services for children. Whatever the type of community activity, there is a potential for encountering circumstances or information which may require child protection action"*.

The implication of this means that church leaders and parochial church councils have a duty and responsibility to take action if information comes to light within a parish which raises the possibility that a risk exists that a child may be abused. Thus, when there is knowledge or suspicion that a church member may have convictions for sexual offences against children, or may have a propensity to abuse children, guidance must be sought as to how to respond to such information or rumour.

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## **5.5 The Insurance position**

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If a person holds responsibility for working with children in the church, Ecclesiastical Insurance Group state that where a parish has not implemented and followed the procedures in its Diocesan Child Protection Policy, and abuse occurs, there may be implications for its insurance cover. Thus, if information or rumour comes to light concerning a volunteer helper, and action is not taken, this could result in insurance cover not being met. (See section 8.1 on PCC Liability)

The implications regarding negligence if the person is a church member, as distinct from a volunteer helper or employee, are less clear. However, it seems likely that should such a situation be ignored and abuse result, in the current climate of litigation there could be implications for the parish or the diocese.

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## **5.6 Principles of good practice**

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It is clear that when a known or suspected perpetrator of sexual abuse is a member of the church, this may present a risk for others in the congregation.

The following principles should undergird good practice in the recognition, response, management and pastoring of risk:

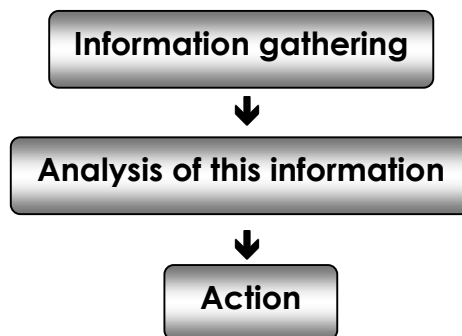
- The safety of children and young people is the paramount concern of the church
- The church is committed to contributing to the integration of sex offenders both into the church and, where possible, the community
- Decisions involving the management of this risk will be made collaboratively with other agencies
- It is the responsibility of the Bishop's Child Protection Management Group to ensure consistency within the diocese
- Supports for the clergy will be set up through the Archdeacon
- The process will be under-pinned by ongoing, up-to-date training for clergy and church leaders provided by the staff at the Ministries Forum.

The following situations are addressed in this Policy:

- A perpetrator seeks to join a parish
- A perpetrator is already a member of the congregation
- A perpetrator leaves a parish
- Suspicion and/or rumours come to light within a parish

**In each of these situations** the incumbent must inform the Bishop's Child Protection Adviser (BCPA) within one working day via the Bishop's Office or Chaplain. In the event of an interregnum, it is the responsibility of the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator to ensure this information is communicated to the BCPA.

It is the responsibility of the BCPA to ensure that the following 3 stages are followed. These stages will form the basis of quality assessment and management of the risks.



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## 5.7 Procedures

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### Information gathering

It is the responsibility of the BCPA, as link person with the statutory sector, to liaise with the appropriate agencies and ensure a forum is established to gather information.

In order to understand what risk the person may pose to children and young people, it is essential to gain as much information as possible.

**The BCPA will advise Social Services, and/or the Police and/or, the Probation Service of the person's relationship with the parish. A decision will be made as to whether a Risk Management meeting under the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or an Interagency Child Protection Strategy Meeting may be required in relation to the adult to identify either specific or general risk to children and young people. Such a meeting will involve representatives from the relevant organizations and the incumbent of the parish. It may be appropriate for other key persons in the parish to attend, depending, for example, if the church is in a period of interregnum or there is a team ministry.**

It is important that church members or leaders do not attempt to make judgements and assess the person's risk based only on information given by the person himself. This is because of the tendency of perpetrators to minimize the full extent of their abusive behaviour and deny responsibility for it. Thus, this denial and manipulation mean that perpetrators become skilled at finding ways of ensuring others are deceived. Therefore information needs corroboration by those with a statutory responsibility for the protection of children and the wider public. The person should be informed that the BCPA will be communicating with the statutory agencies unless there are reasons not to inform him at this stage. Such reasons are most likely to relate to situations of suspicion or rumour. The BCPA will advise the incumbent or other church leader if this situation arises.

### Process of analysis

The information shared at either of the above meetings will be analysed in order to establish what this means for the church.

The following need to be considered on the basis of information from Social Services, the Probation Service, the Police, and the parish:

- The nature of the offence or suspicion
- If a convicted offender, the offending pattern of behaviour, e.g. by teaching children a sport, by leading a choir, by becoming involved in an activity where there are adults and children, by befriending parents and becoming a trusted friend of the family
- If convicted, the person's response to any treatment programme
- If on licence, when this expires
- The person's current involvement in the parish
- The person's known friendship/social network
- The person's previous history
- The person's behaviour and attitudes, awareness, empathy and acceptance of the impact his behaviour has had on the child and the child's family
- The person's attitude towards what has happened
- If convicted, the person's response to any treatment programme
- If known, the person's "triggers", i.e. those situations which intensify the person's need or motivation to re-offend, e.g. a summer Guide camp near the church may act as a trigger to an offender with previous offences against Girl Guides/Brownies.

Having considered these areas and identified a risk, an assessment will be made of what this means for the particular church. This will depend on:

- The design of the church building and staffing levels in the parish, as this will affect how possible it will be to ensure adequate supervision if this is deemed necessary, e.g. a large rambling church building such as a Cathedral will present different issues regarding supervision to a small parish church with an established church membership.

- The range of services and other activities in the parish, e.g. mid-week services, house groups, play groups, uniformed organizations, music groups, choirs, the bell tower, servers.
- The range of specific children and youth activities in the parish

### **The Risk Management Plan**

The parish will be assisted to draw up a plan of action which will include a decision as to whether the perpetrator should be integrated into, or remain in, the church community and, if so:

- what risks this poses to children, and how these should be managed
- what other pastoral concerns this presents, and how these might be managed
- how those in the parish who 'need to know' about the individual can best respond in order to reinforce any efforts he may be making not to repeat his abusive behaviour.
- how and when the perpetrator may be informed personally of the above steps

Guidance and advice on this plan will be offered by the representatives from the statutory agencies. It would be considered exceptional to reach a view to exclude an individual from a parish.

### **Action**

This plan will then be actioned within the parish by the incumbent or church leader.

The BCPA will establish with the incumbent/church leader what support is needed to implement these actions. The BCPA is responsible for ensuring that, as far as possible, the parish receives appropriate support and guidance to effect this.

The BCPA will attempt to ensure that the incumbent has access to the ongoing support needed to continue to manage the situation. It is hoped that some supervision and support needs will be met by key people in the statutory agencies.

The perpetrator will be advised that should he leave the parish and join another church community, it will be necessary to ensure the leader in this church is aware of the background. The perpetrator will be encouraged and supported by the current incumbent in informing this leader. However, if he is not willing to do so, then he must be made aware that it is the duty and responsibility of the incumbent to alert the leaders in the new church community.

Awareness that there will be adult survivors in the congregation is vital. It needs to be recognized that should they become aware of perpetrators in the congregation, then it is likely to trigger old memories of abuse. The parish needs to be prepared to provide pastoral support if necessary, and possibly consider financing therapeutic counselling.

## 5.8 Specific situations

### A perpetrator seeks to join a parish

#### *Example*

*You receive a telephone call from the chaplain at a prison in the South of England. John has been meeting with the chaplain regularly during the last 9 months of his prison sentence, which he is serving for sexual offences against his daughters. He attends many of the worship services and has been meeting weekly with other inmates for prayer and bible study. During the early months of his 7 year sentence, he suffered from and received psychiatric treatment for depression. He has served 5 years of his sentence and is to be discharged on licence next month. His marriage has failed and he is now divorced. He is not in contact with his former wife and their 3 daughters and son. John will be settling in Birmingham and is anxious to join a church community. His probation officer has recently found somewhere for him to live within your parish. The chaplain wants you to write to John, if possible to meet with him, and hopes you will give him every support as he rebuilds his life in the community.*

#### **The following procedures should now be followed:**

- a. The incumbent/church leader informs the BCPA.
- b. The BCPA advises the statutory agencies and seeks guidance.
- c. The BCPA attends a Risk management Meeting if appropriate or co-ordinates a meeting with key personnel in the parish.
- d. Information is shared.
- e. This is analysed, and guidance and advice offered.

John will be made aware that this process is taking place.

#### **In respect of a perpetrator joining a parish, consideration will be given by this group to:**

- who needs to know within the congregation
- how John might be introduced within the congregation
- what child protection agreement should be established with John
- who should be responsible for ensuring compliance with this plan
- if not, what sanctions should be imposed, and how
- which named person in the Police, Probation and Social Services will be available for future guidance and advice, and for referring of concerns and any new information
- how the parish can effectively support John in ways which encourage him not to re-offend
- what are the time and physical boundary constraints.

Actions are agreed and roles and responsibilities established at the end of this meeting.

Actions are implemented within the parish by the incumbent/church leader, who will be able to liaise with the BCPA throughout.

Quarterly progress reviews will be held for the first year at least, and 6 monthly thereafter, by the incumbent/church leader, appropriate others, the BCPA, and the supervising Probation Officer while the perpetrator is on licence. When the licence expires, the supervision by the Probation Officer terminates. However, the management of risk will remain an issue and, therefore, there will be a continued need to review and plan appropriately. A decision will be made about frequency of reviews.

The named personnel in the statutory agencies will be advised of any significant issues relating to the perpetrator by the incumbent or church leader.

Representatives in the statutory agencies will advise the BCPA if any pertinent information comes to light, concerning the perpetrator, which is relevant to his involvement in the parish.

During the duration of the perpetrator's licence, the incumbent/church leader and the supervising Probation Officer will remain in contact. The co-ordination of this will be the responsibility of the Probation Officer. Should any difficulties in communication emerge, the incumbent should advise the BCPA.

### **A known perpetrator is already a member of the congregation**

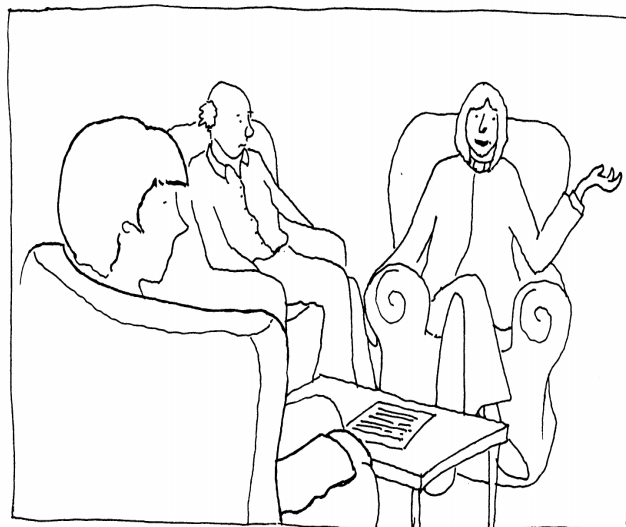
*Example*

*Stanford has been attending St Lucy's for the past 15 months. Initially, he seemed a bit of a loner and usually left the services quickly, not staying to have a coffee and chat. You tried to make him welcome at the outset, encouraging him to get involved in a house group, but he showed little interest and seemed very vague about where he had been before joining St Lucy's. You seem to recollect that he had moved from a village in the north of the Diocese, and you have a vague memory about his having been made redundant. You were surprised and pleased to learn that Stanford has indeed joined a house group run by Winston and Marcia - a lively group where there are a number of couples in their 30's with families, plus several single people. Stanford, in his 40's, is the eldest in the group. You are aware that he is coming to more services and stays afterwards, usually talking to other members of his house group.*

*Marcia speaks to you after the family service; she is anxious to meet with you, and seems troubled and distressed. You meet with her and Winston the following evening, and they tell you that they have been praying with Stanford, who has shared that he wants to be forgiven for the things he did in the past. It transpires that Stanford has been in prison for child abuse. Marcia and Winston believe he has changed, but Marcia especially is worried, as the group have regular social gatherings involving their children. Group members often baby-sit for each other. She wonders if she should tell the other members.*

**The following procedures should now be followed:**

- a. The incumbent/church leader must advise the BCPA, who will meet with them to assess what risk is posed. A decision will be made about how the perpetrator is to be made aware of the actions that will be necessary to assess this risk.
- b. If the church has not accessed information from the statutory agencies, the BCPA will liaise with these organizations to *gather information and analyse the implications.*



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- c. This may result in an inter-agency strategy meeting between the parish and other agencies, which results in the parish implementing new actions to manage the situation.

**These actions are likely to include:**

- What agreement should be established with the perpetrator
- Who should be responsible for ensuring the conditions of this agreement are kept
- What sanctions should be imposed, and how
- Who needs to know within the congregation
- How the perpetrator can best be supported in ways which encourage him not to re-offend.

In the event of a full inter-agency strategy meeting not being deemed necessary, the BCPA will co-ordinate a planning meeting with the incumbent, other parish representatives and others as appropriate, to plan an agreed course of action.

These actions will be implemented by the incumbent/church leader, supported by the BCPA.

**A perpetrator leaves a parish and joins another church community**

*Example*

*Abdul, 29 years, joined St Winifred's 6 months ago. He told you soon after he joined that he had been in trouble some years earlier for offences of gross indecency against teenage boys. Now he is saved, he is a changed man and wants to put the past behind him. You have welcomed him into St Winifred's and established a child protection agreement with him that he will not offer his services to any of the group leaders running the children's activities, nor get involved in giving lifts to young people after services. You have arranged for him to be part of a house group of other young single adults, and both of you have talked to the house group leaders about Abdul's conviction. Once or twice you have had to talk to Abdul about his drifting to groups of youngsters after the evening service, and he has been a bit annoyed at your interference.*

*Last week he came to you and said he is leaving St Winifred's. He does not feel he can serve the Lord properly and feels you do not trust him. He has recently been attending a very lively, charismatic free church, and has decided to join them.*

### **The following procedures should now be followed:**

The incumbent/church leader must inform the BCPA, who will take steps to:

- establish whether Abdul has, with the incumbent's support, informed the new church leadership himself of the conditions in the child protection agreement;  
if not, then negotiate with the incumbent how they intend to ensure this information is passed on to any new parish, within or outside the diocese, and with Bill's knowledge and preferably agreement. If no agreement is given, the BCPA will seek legal advice
- contact the child protection adviser in another denomination if it is known that the perpetrator intends to join another church community
- contact the church leader in another denomination if there is no child protection adviser
- advise Social Services, and attend a strategy meeting with the incumbent if requested
- ensure that Abdul is informed of the action which has been taken.

### **Suspicion and/or rumours come to light within a parish**

#### *Example*

*St Fred's is a lively church on a housing estate, with a policy of welcoming newcomers into the fellowship. Every-member ministry is encouraged, and the church has a large Sunday School (50 children in a church of 90 adults). Cho Han, a young man in his twenties, joins St Fred's; he is quite quiet and doesn't say much about himself, but attends most of the meetings the church runs.*

*A rumour - more of 'the word on the street' - reaches the Priest in Charge of St Fred's, that Cho Han may have a past involving sex offences. In the course of his enquiries into this, the priest finds there is sufficient evidence of this past to be of concern.*

The incumbent/church leader will discuss these rumours or suspicions with the source person(s), and establish their substance without approaching Steve at this stage.

The incumbent/church leader must inform the BCPA, who will assess how to act, and advise accordingly. This may result in a subsequent joint meeting with the source person(s).

Depending on the outcome, this is likely to involve the BCPA making enquiries with Social Services, the Police, and possibly the Probation Service to gather information.

The outcome of these enquiries will lead to:

- rumours/suspicions being confirmed
- rumours/suspicions not being confirmed.

In the event of confirmation by other agencies that there is a known history of sexual abuse, or that there have been previous concerns, the process of *sharing information, analysis and action* will be followed (see Section 5.6).

In the event of no confirmation then advice will be given by the BCPA on whether it is necessary to monitor the situation, and for how long.

## 5.9 Communication during an interregnum

In order to manage these four situations, it is important to have the following procedures in place in the event of an incumbent leaving the parish.

- a. Prior to the incumbent's departure, two persons should be given responsibility for ensuring that the agreement with the perpetrator is reviewed and monitored.
- b. It is important to carefully consider who should be nominated for this responsibility. The incumbent may seek support and advice from the BCPA before a decision is reached.
- c. These two people may already be aware of the background, and involved with the individual in his life in the church.
- d. If it is decided to delegate this responsibility to people who are not aware of the individual's background, it is important that they respect and agree to the boundaries of confidentiality.
- e. The incumbent should advise the individual that these actions will be taken, and introduce him to the two people (if not already known) prior to the incumbent's departure.
- f. The incumbent will arrange a meeting with them for the purpose of amplifying and clarifying the agreement.
- g. When a new incumbent is appointed, the BCPA will be responsible for ensuring they are briefed about the situation.

## 5.10 Pastoring guidance

**The main focus of pastoral care will be for the individual.** It is important to be aware of, and accept, the view of most professionals who work with perpetrators, who believe that they will need maintenance counselling for the rest of their lives. Thus in theological terms, recovery from the "sin" of sexual abuse is a daily ongoing process.

A small number of committed people can play a valuable role in this by:

- Following the advice given by those with knowledge of, or who are working with, the perpetrator.
- Seeking guidance and supervision from these professionals, the BCPA and the church leader/incumbent.
- Continually reaffirming to the perpetrator that it is because of their care for him that they will not tolerate abusive behaviour any more, and that they are committed to supporting him as he makes efforts to change his offending pattern of behaviour.
- Giving the message that, because they love their children, and because they love the person, they will not allow him to be in situations where he might be tempted to abuse.
- Helping the perpetrator to understand and accept that repentance is much more than saying sorry - it is an ongoing turning away from the destruction caused to another child of God, attempting to make amends, and offering restitution.
- Encouraging him to co-operate with the legal system if he has been convicted, and to participate in any treatment programme available to him.

## Pastoral care to others

On occasions, the incumbent or church leader will need to ensure that pastoral care is extended to others - especially should a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator become publicly known within the church. This might involve:

### **a. Those who are party to the agreement and/or work with the individual**

- checking that people remain comfortable with the information and are coping with the issues raised
- ensuring that those committed to supporting the individual get the opportunity for reflection
- sustaining people's contribution.

### **b. The wider congregation**

- considering how to inform people of the details, and how to help people handle the information
- recognizing that this may for some people release memories, and for others remind them of other undisclosed incidents (possibly involving other people)
- accepting that there will be a wide range of (theological) responses, from condemnation to disbelief, and needing to hold these together. Most people will not have the personal and spiritual resources to respond confidently
- balancing the needs of the wider church over against the needs of the individual
- helping young people come to terms with the new information about someone to whom they may have deep allegiance; and also responding to their need to interpret their feelings.

### **c. The family and close friends of perpetrators**

- being aware of the needs of family and close friends and arranging appropriate pastoral care, recognizing they may need *different* sources of support.

### **d. The incumbent/church leader**

- recognizing the pressures and demands of all such situations, both practically and spiritually
- being ready to take advice from the BCPA and others
- accepting the need for guided reflection and supervision
- considering who is the best person to offer pastoral care in a given situation. This may not be the incumbent/church leader, especially when there is the need to separate out pastoral care of the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator and pastoral care of the congregation. Diocesan Advisers listed in Appendix A1, could make very helpful contributions to such a process. Those responsible for pastoral care and spiritual direction may well be able to assist.

### **e. The community**

- It is recognized that the wider community may gain knowledge that a perpetrator is a member of its local church. This could result in a hostile reaction. The fact that a risk management plan has been put in place following collaboration with statutory agencies ensures that the church can give the community reassurance on matters of child protection.

- Should this hostility be demonstrated overtly, and/or include a media interest, then the church has the right to seek and expect its actions to be reinforced publicly by Area Child Protection Committee agencies' representatives.
- In very extreme circumstances, the police would intervene to ensure protection for church staff and leaders is provided.

## 5.11 Example of a parish child protection agreement made with a known perpetrator of abuse

### **Circles of support and accountability** – from the House of Bishops' Policy 2004

'Circles of support and accountability' are being piloted by various organizations, including the Society of Friends and the Lucy Faithful Foundation, under the guidance of the Home Office. They offer a system of structured befriending and supervision for sex offenders, usually at the point of release from prison. Many of the volunteers involved in the circles are recruited from churches, although the offenders are not necessarily Christian. If a known sex offender who attends a church is also part of a circle of support and accountability, they will have a specific contract with the circle as well as any parish arrangements agreed with the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser.

In the following case study, the agreement described is related to the details and the seriousness of the risk that the perpetrator represents, as outlined in the scenario. In cases where the risk is greater, and/or where younger children are at risk, the details of the agreement would be more stringent.

#### *Scenario*

*St Fred's is a lively church on a housing estate, with a policy of welcoming newcomers into the fellowship. Every member ministry is encouraged, and the church has a large SundaySchool (50 children in a church of 90 adults). Cho Han, a young man in his twenties, joins St Fred's; he is quite quiet and doesn't say much about himself, but attends most of the meetings the church runs.*

*A rumour – more of 'the word on the street' – reaches the Priest in Charge of St Fred's, that Cho Han may have a past involving sex offences. In the course of his enquiries into this, the priest finds there is sufficient evidence of this past to be of concern. He contacts the BCPA, and a risk management meeting is set up, at which information concerning Cho Han's past is disclosed, and the judgement made that he constitutes a 'moderate risk' to the young people in the church, particularly young teenage girls.*

#### **The Child Protection Agreement**

As a result of this meeting, the priest arranges to see Cho Han, and makes him aware that he knows about Cho Han's past. He also makes Cho Han aware that he is welcome in St Fred's, and that the church wants to do all it can to help him feel part of the fellowship and to know God's forgiveness for past sins. However, in the light of Cho Han's past, and in keeping with the church's policy on safeguarding children and young people, Steve's freedoms within the fellowship are necessarily limited.

#### **The priest makes it clear to Cho Han that:**

- a. there needs to be an agreed risk management plan called a "Child Protection Agreement" between Cho Han and the priest which outlines prescribed activities within the church.

- b. though the child protection agreement may need to be modified from time to time, it will always stipulate that Cho Han cannot work with children or be part of the church's work amongst young people.
- c. the child protection agreement will be known to the priest, the church wardens, and the principle leaders of the work with children and young people.
- d. any non-compliance with this agreement will result in further action, which may eventually mean asking Cho Han to leave the church.
- e. the priest and Cho Han will meet together, once a month, for pastoral care and review of the Agreement.

**The child protection agreement that is drawn up contains the following items:**

- Cho Han will at no time offer his services to either the Sunday School or the Youth Group, either as leader or helper. It may be that those 'not in the know' ask Cho Han if he would consider these activities. Without disclosing the reasons, Cho Han will always refuse such requests.
- Unless the trip is for the whole church family, Cho Han will not offer to be part of any 'off site' activity. This includes offering lifts to young people.
- Cho Han will be welcome at all church services, including the monthly all-age worship and the youth orientated services. However, he will avoid getting into 'one to one' chats with young people.
- Physical contact with young people should be restricted to the normal courtesies, i.e. shaking hands. In the sharing of the Peace at communion, Cho Han should avoid hugging, even although this is a normal part of St Fred's practice. It may be that he is not the initiator of the hug, in which case we let it ride. But in any case, he should avoid hugging young people, and should never initiate such contact himself.
- If Cho Han is finding it hard to keep these rules, he should seek an interview with the priest, for discussion and prayer. However, the rules are non-negotiable, and though every effort will be made to encourage Steve and to help him keep to the agreement, he should be aware of this fact.
- Cho Han is advised and encouraged to join a home fellowship group in the church, where he can receive love and acceptance from other adults.

The Child Protection Agreement is put in writing, and both Cho Han and the priest sign it. Copies are made for Cho Han, the priest, the wardens, and the principal leaders of the work with children and young people. The incumbent sends a copy to the convener of the Risk Management meeting and/or the BCPA for the record. All copies must be kept in secure conditions normally accessible only to the signatories.

**The House of Bishops' Policy 2004 provides the following guidance:**

It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries, both for the protection of the young people and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse. Prepare an agreement which might include the following elements:

- attend designated services/meetings only;
- sit apart from children;
- stay away from areas of the building where children meet;
- attend a house group where there are no children;
- decline hospitality where there are children;
- never be alone with children;

- never work, or be part of a mixed age group, with children.

These serve as **examples**, not check lists, of what should be included in a Child Protection Agreement. Being aware of the recommendation of the statutory agencies involved, it is appropriate to discuss in detail with the perpetrator where he sees the risks for his re-offending in the church situation and include these in the agreement. This serves to give him both an opportunity to contribute to his risk management plan and also to reinforce his ownership of the boundaries. It is important to include what he **can** be involved in, and the support available to him alongside putting the boundaries in place.

See suggested Form of Agreement - overleaf.

The BCPA should be consulted in the drafting process and sign off the final Agreement.

Suggested Form of Agreement  
**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**CHILD PROTECTION AGREEMENT**

An agreement between the Leader of the Parish Church, the person, and Bishop of Birmingham's Child Protection Adviser

This agreement is necessary to enable the Church to balance its spiritual and statutory responsibilities to protect children and young people who are invited into the church community and also to reflect the church's responsibility for care of its adult members about whom there have been child protection concerns. In this instance this is due .....

The Church recognizes the person's contribution to the Church (outline what this has been).

The Church intends this agreement to reflect the desire of the Church to support the person's role in the church by clarifying what is expected of them.

**The Agreement**

As a member of the Church, you share the Church's responsibility to ensure the protection of all young people within its community. This requires that you avoid any contact with children and young people under the age of 18 at the church. This includes children in the congregation and children you might encounter as a result of your involvement with the congregation.

You have agreed:

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- 
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Should you leave the Church and intend to join another Church, then we would expect you to advise the person in charge of that church of the conditions in this agreement. The Church Leader will support you in doing so, but should you not be willing to do so, he/she has a duty to share this information with that Church Leader.

This agreement will be reviewed when and by whom: .....

**Conclusion**

If you are unable to comply with the terms of this agreement or if you have difficulty in complying with the terms in certain situations, then in every event you should make contact with the Church Leader who will discuss this with you. Conversely, if the Church Leader becomes aware that the terms of this agreement are not being complied with, then he will initiate a meeting with you.

This agreement recognizes the need to balance the needs and rights of all individuals concerned in and with the Church community.

Signed..... Date.....  
*Individual concerned*

Signed..... Date.....  
*Incumbent*

Signed..... Date.....  
*Bishop's Child Protection Adviser*