

13 June 2007

PRESS RELEASE

NEW GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS TO FORCE POLICE TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF LOCAL SEX OFFENDERS TO CHURCHES FOR FIRST TIME

CCPAS welcomes new initiative

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), one of the UK's leading experts in advising and training Christian and secular organisations in child protection practices, today welcomed new government proposals which will - for the first time - require police to disclose details of known sex offenders to churches and organisations in their areas.

David Pearson of CCPAS commented: "Until now, there has been a major problem in that some police services in the UK have cited concerns about data protection and human rights legislation as reasons for not supplying the names and details of known sex offenders to churches and other places of worship in their communities.

"We are delighted that that the government will be introducing new legislation to close this loophole, as MAPPA* authorities (police, probation and the prison service) will now be given a statutory duty to consider disclosure in all cases". As a major contributor to the Home Office Review of the Protection of Children from Sex Offenders that was published today, David Pearson was involved in the launch of the review at the Home Office by Government ministers, Jerry Sutcliffe and Vernon Coker.

Pearson commented, "At the launch Ministers assured me that this should put a stop to the current absurd position, where neighbouring police services may have totally different approaches to disclosing this key information – a patchy situation which potentially allows

sex offenders to fall through the net, with increased risks of abuse to our children. CCPAS has also asked for a code of practice to be developed to ensure responsible use of such sensitive material by places of worship and other organisations in receipt of such information and the Ministers have said this would be done.

It is important to recognise the vital role played by places of worship in not only providing for and protecting children but safely supporting known offenders. This support and the safety of children can only be achieved if proper information is made available to clergy and leaders.”

NOTE: *Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were introduced in 2001 and are a set of arrangements under which the prison, probation and police services (the ‘responsible authorities’) in all 42 MAPPA areas across England and Wales, are legally required to share information and work together to assess and manage the risk posed by dangerous, violent and sex offenders.

Media Enquiries:	Iain Taylor Taylor Communications 01732 461060 or 07979 914217 taylor.comm@tiscali.co.uk	or	David Pearson CCPAS 0845120 4550 or 07836 376803 david@ccpas.co.uk
------------------	---	----	--

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) is an independent Christian charity providing professional child protection advice, support and training to churches, faith and other organisations throughout the UK and beyond.

Every week it is involved with:

- 30 churches/faith organisations helped in developing child protection policies
- 830 children’s workers and leaders trained
- 500 contact helpline (24 hours) or email for advice
- 300 criminal records checks carried out for churches and faith groups

For more information, please see www.ccpas.co.uk