

PRESS RELEASE

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***POLICING INNOCENCE* FAILS TO OFFER SOLUTIONS IN FIGHT
AGAINST CHILD ABUSE, SAYS CCPAS**

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) today described 'Rebecca Andrews' new book *Policing Innocence* as very disappointing. Although graphically describing the dangers to children, she does not inform her readers about the proven range of measures that exist and the progress that has been made in the fight against child abuse in UK churches.

The upshot is that the book will, in CCPAS's view, cause alarm and despondency to no good purpose, since much progress is being made across the denominations and independent churches in tackling the problem. One way Andrews could have demonstrated this is through case studies of good practice, which have sadly been omitted. This is a lost opportunity, since their inclusion could have offered real hope to people unsure of how to combat this type of child abuse.

The book has failed, in three key areas, to communicate what are effective strategies for dealing with the very real problems she describes. These are:

- ◇ Precisely how parents can teach personal safety skills to their children, in a simple and straightforward way
- ◇ The safe recruitment and safeguarding practices that should be followed by churches, together with the measures that must be taken to manage known sex offenders attending services. (Of particular concern, her account of her own work as a church child protection co-ordinator falls well short of government expectations published in 1993 and more recent safeguarding requirements!)

- ◇ The extensive range of support and resources that are available, both to churches to help them deal with issues and to offenders, to help them face up to their behaviour and prevent recurrences

Policing Innocence does contain much useful and important information, in particular about the grooming of children and about the activities of abusers on the internet and the horrendous images of children which police find there. CCPAS fully supports Andrews's point that merely having policies in place is insufficient without being prepared to act upon them, too. She is also right to insist that leaders to show resolve and shrewdness at all times.

Executive Director of CCPAS David Pearson commented: "This is a disappointing book, all the more so since it represents a missed opportunity to inform the public about what can be done to tackle the threat of abuse in our churches.

CCPAS is concerned that Andrews has not acknowledged the very real problem faced by churches because of a police refusal in some areas to disclose information about the presence of abusers in the congregation. Some do, but many refuse to, citing data protection or human rights legislation as their justification, thus placing children at great risk. CCPAS is very concerned about the position in which this places churches whereby they have not been given information that could be used to protect such children. The matter has been raised by CCPAS with government ministers on several occasions. This problem is acknowledged in the Home Office 'Review of the Protection of Children from Sex Offenders' (2007) and the government is proposing measures to placing a duty on police to consider disclosing information in all relevant cases.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Policing Innocence by Rebecca Andrews is published by Authentic media. ISBN 9781860246265

Guidance to Churches is a fully comprehensive safeguarding manual published by CCPAS for places of worship and organisations serving children.

CCPAS is an independent Christian charity providing professional child protection advice and support across church denominations and organisations throughout the UK.

CCPAS was established in 1977. It assists churches, organisations, social services and other child care agencies as well as individual children and families by:

- helping churches and other organisations adopt safe practice in order to protect children from abuse – and youth workers from the possibility of false allegations
- advising on individual cases, giving ongoing help to leaders and others.
- training across the UK and providing “in-house” training and other resources
- acting as external consultants to denominational/organisational child protection advisors
- counselling individual adults or children about past or present abuse.

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