

## **PRESS RELEASE**

26 November 2009

### **CCPAS SAYS CHURCHES STILL COMPLACENT IN SOME AREAS OF SAFEGUARDING**

Keynote new research shows too much reliance on CRB checks - written  
references taken up on just 50% of paid church workers

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), the UK's leading experts in advising and training faith and non-faith organisations in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults today published research findings based on 10 safeguarding standards for places of worship. On the day that the Irish government publishes its report on past abuse in Catholic institutions, CCPAS say that churches in the UK should not be complacent.

This major new research across church denominations and independent churches has just been conducted for CCPAS by Brierley Consultancy. It builds upon previous research into child protection issues carried out in 2003 and 2005 and shows an improved picture in many areas but worryingly there are a number of alarming shortcomings highlighted.

Major points for action include:

- Safe recruitment practice needs improvement. More than half of those recruited to work with children are not asked to complete application forms, or supply referees, nor are they interviewed, contrary to government recommendations since 1993.

- Churches need to ensure that all those in regular contact with children undergo safeguarding training on appointment. Just over a half of newly appointed workers receive this training.
- All staff and volunteers need to be appropriately supported and managed. In some church denominations and groups some 40% of workers had no named supervisor. The same was true for regular staff meetings.
- The need for effective pastoral care for those who have been affected by abuse needs to be recognised as only just over a half of churches state that they refer to specialist agencies for counselling and support.

David Pearson, Executive Director of CCPAS, commented: ““The shocking and sordid events detailed in today’s report into the behaviour of a number of priests working in the Archdiocese of Dublin reminds us – if we needed any reminding – of how child abuse destroys the lives of its innocent victims.

“That abuse may have taken place in the past, but the price of child safety is eternal vigilance on the parts of those adults who look after them.

“Virtually all of those surveyed in our report (99%) had a safeguarding policy. Our ‘10 Safeguarding Standards’ for places of worship and other organisations encourage churches to aim higher in terms of child protection across the board and mirror government and denominational expectations. It’s all very well having policies; all organisations working with children need to put these essentials into practice.

“The research highlights an over reliance on CRB checks as the only means of assessing a person’s suitability for appointment. As crucial as CRB checks are they are just one tool in the toolkit of safe recruitment. Such checks are the last stage in a safe recruitment process not the only stage! We need to remember that most offenders are not caught and would not therefore be known to the authorities”

“Today’s report by the Catholic church again highlights both the need for effective measures to safeguard children, the proper and effective reporting of any concerns and the need to support everyone who has been affected by abuse.”

- ENDS -

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

See attached summary of 2009 research “Safeguarding Children in the Church” and “Safe and Secure – Key Facts (summary of 10 safeguarding standards for places of worship and other organisations.)

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](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)