

PRESS RELEASE

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CHILD PROTECTION SEMINAR TO HELP COLCHESTER CHURCHES 'FACE THE UNTHINKABLE'

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, is to run a child protection training seminar in Colchester, on Saturday 9 February 2008.

The seminar, entitled *Facing the Unthinkable*, will run between 9.00am and 1.30pm at Kingsland Church, 2 London Road, Lexham, Colchester, CO3 4DE.

The event is designed for all who work with children in and around Colchester, including those in a church setting – for example youth and children's workers, Sunday School helpers and church leaders. It will be presented by David Pearson, Executive Director of CCPAS, who has over 30 years experience in the area of child protection, together with Pauline Pearson, a counsellor who works with both children and adults who have experienced abuse.

Facing the Unthinkable seminars provide invaluable guidance on child protection in the church. Drawing on Government documents such as 'Safe for Harm' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', the seminars look at the different forms of abuse, how to recognise the signs and symptoms. Most importantly they give clear and practical guidance on how churches in the Colchester area should respond to children who may have been abused.

Those attending will be given advice on preventative measures, such as how to develop a safe environment for children in their churches, as well as guidelines for preparing child protection policies, information on the role of Social Services and the Police and safe recruitment for workers and leaders. The seminar is supported by a range of relevant books and resources, and access to CCPAS's 24 hour helpline, which is staffed by experienced child protection social workers.

David Pearson says: "The purpose of the *Facing the Unthinkable* seminar is to help make the Church a safe place for children. Every church in Colchester must have a child protection policy in place which does not then simply gather dust, but is put into practice and used consistently by all its workers and volunteers. This is to help make our churches safe for all who come through its doors."

For 15 years the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) has been running the '*Facing the Unthinkable*' child protection training seminars. They were the inspiration of David Pearson and CCPAS now runs approximately 100 seminars each year across the UK. The event in Colchester is one of a number that CCPAS have arranged across the UK during 2008.

The charity continues to be a key force in developing child protection policies for the church. Its materials and guidelines are followed by thousands of churches, across every major denomination in the UK, as well as a number of secular organisations and other faith groups. CCPAS has also taken a lead in developing procedures for other pastoral activities such as how churches can care for those with learning and physical disabilities. It recognises that although churches may want to stretch themselves in their efforts to reach out to their communities, the safety of children must come first and this desire must not come at the expense of an effective child protection policy.

For more information or to book a place at the *Facing the Unthinkable* seminar please contact Karen Ledger at CCPAS Head Office on 0845 120 4550 or visit the CCPAS website at www.ccpas.co.uk. Individual bookings cost £17.50 per person (includes training and a free workbook). Group rates are available.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

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