

Safeguarding with Confidence



BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

The Bishops' Conference, with the Executive of the Conference of Religious, is pleased to receive the Cumberlege Commission Report, Safeguarding with Confidence. We are very grateful to Baroness Julia Cumberlege, the Commission and staff for their work and for the comprehensive Report they have presented to us reviewing the implementation of the Nolan Report and making recommendations for change.

We welcome the emphasis that is placed on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults within our Parishes, Dioceses and Communities of Religious. As Bishops and Congregational Leaders we are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. We are confident that it is in the Dioceses, Parishes and Communities of Religious that the One Church Approach finds its application.

For us this is an opportunity to express sincerely the gratitude due to the priests, laypeople and religious who in recent years have been so generous in engaging with child protection policies and procedures. We are convinced that in building on the work of COPCA and the experience gained within the Church, a system can be put in place to support us all in the work of safeguarding.

To receive Safeguarding with Confidence we have established an Implementation Group. We are grateful to Mr Bill Kilgallon, Chief Executive of St Gemma's Hospice, Leeds, for his willingness to chair this group and to Bishop Declan Lang and Sr Jane Bertelsen for agreeing to act as Vice-Chairs.

We mandate the Implementation Group to:

1. Examine the responses received to Safeguarding with Confidence, consider the pace and scope of the changes recommended to us and propose a process of implementation.
2. Draw in other members to assist in their work. We ask that the Group pays particular attention to the canonical implications of the proposed changes.
3. Consider in detail the national structure being proposed.

4. To make arrangements for the oversight of the work of COPCA from the 2008 Spring Meeting of the Bishops' Conference.
5. Begin a detailed study and explanation of all aspects of the proposals, particularly on the handling of allegations in chapter 4 of Safeguarding with Confidence. We readily accept and want a clear and transparent process, and so the recommendations should be thoroughly tested and where necessary adapted to suit the reality of Church life.
6. Prepare detailed costs for national structures and be informed of the resources made available for safeguarding within Dioceses and Religious Congregations.
7. Present a first implementation report at the Spring 2008 Meeting of the Bishops' Conference.

As Bishops and Congregational Leaders we have committed ourselves to undertake training to become ever more familiar with the principles and implications of safeguarding.

We fully share the vision of the Cumberlege Commission that the Catholic Church in England and Wales be "confident in its ability to practise fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and vulnerable adults and to respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs and keep them safe from harm" (2.32).