

# SAFEGUARDING



NEWSLETTER  
SUMMER 2009



*"Lord God, Bless each of us during this holiday season. Help us to remember others during this time of activities and rest. We lead with your love."*

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

eaglais na h-alba

## Head of Safeguarding – Farewell

**T**HIS year's General Assembly was my last as Head of Safeguarding. Having continued to work with young people on a voluntary capacity during my time at The Church of Scotland, I was pleased to be offered the post as Service Manager with a foster care company establishing a service in the east of Scotland. I negotiated my start day to coincide with the end of the General Assembly this year to ensure that I could see the Forgiveness and Proportionality report presented. This concluded two years work by the Working Group and is a piece of work that I was very proud to contribute to. The safety of children and vulnerable adults within the Church is of paramount importance and I was delighted to see the work of the Forgiveness and Proportionality Working Group on behalf of the Safeguarding Committee endorsed by this year's General Assembly. Having seen this piece of work through to a conclusion I felt able to move on to new professional challenges.



As Head of Safeguarding it has been very rewarding over the last two years to be part of a network of volunteers, coordinators and trainers who are so committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults within the church community. Their dedication and enthusiasm has been inspiring and certainly makes a huge contribution to the success of the safeguarding agenda, for which I would like to give my heartfelt thanks. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Safeguarding Office and miss the volunteers, the staff and the fun in the office! It is my pleasure to introduce Richard Crosse as the new Head of Safeguarding. He will be joining the team in September. Richard's experience in safeguarding work at CrossReach will come in very useful, as will his extensive knowledge of relevant legislation in respect of vulnerable adults. I trust you will give him as warm a welcome as you gave me and thank you for your continued support in safeguarding matters. All the very best, Fionna Miskelly

## The Big Issues

AT this year's General Assembly the two biggest issues for the Safeguarding Committee were:

(1) The new legislation coming our way to protect all vulnerable groups; and (2) The report on Forgiveness and Proportionality for Sex Offenders produced after two years of research, consultation and deliberation by

the specifically set up Forgiveness and Proportionality Working Group.

What follows are summaries on both these topics but if you would like to receive further information please email [safeguarding@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cofscotland.org.uk) and we will be happy to forward it on to you.

## The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

The Scottish Government is taking forward a comprehensive implementation programme to deliver the provisions outlined in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (PVG).

The PVG Act delivers the principal recommendation of the Bichard Inquiry Report which was undertaken following the murders in Soham in 2002. This recommendation called for a registration system for all those who work with children and protected adults.

The proposals strengthen and streamline Scotland's Disclosure system so that unsuitable people are excluded from work with vulnerable groups and ends the need for multiple Disclosure applications.

### The scheme

The PVG scheme will: ensure that those who have regular contact with vulnerable groups through the workplace do not have a history of abusive behaviour;

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deliver a fair and consistent system that will be quick and easy for people to use, ending the need for multiple, written Disclosure applications.

Protection for adults will be improved, as the PVG Act creates, for the first time in Scotland, a list of those who are barred from working with protected adults, complementing the safeguards introduced through the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. The PVG Act defines a protected adult as an individual, aged 16 or over who receives one or more type of care or welfare service. This definition recognises that some adults may always require protection due to the nature or frequency of services they receive, while others may do so only for short periods. The purpose of the term 'protected adult' is to distinguish the category of an adult requiring protection and to avoid labelling adults solely on the basis of having a specific condition or disability. Defining adults in this way is intended to help employers identify the services that make an adult 'protected' and therefore assess which posts will constitute regular work. The Act introduces a scheme membership system for people who work with children and protected adults. If a person is considered unsuitable to work with children, protected adults or both, they will be unable to become a scheme member in relation to either workforce or both. It will be an offence for an organisation to permit someone whose name appears on either the Disqualified from Working with Children List or the Disqualified

from Working with Adults List and has thus been barred from undertaking such work.

Scheme membership will end the need for employees (paid or unpaid) to complete multiple written Disclosure applications which is a cause of frustration with the current Disclosure system. Scheme records will be updated automatically when member's circumstances change, for example if they move to a different job or if they are convicted of a crime. It is proposed that this scheme will be computer-based and therefore paper free.

This will enable the employer to do a simple check to verify that a person is a scheme member and therefore not categorised as unsuitable. Checks for volunteers working in the voluntary sector will continue to be paid by the Scottish Government.

A date for the scheme to 'go live' is still to be determined and the Scottish Government has given a commitment that the date will be announced well in advance to allow organisations adequate time to prepare. In the meantime, implementation plans are continuing, in partnership with a range of groups and organisations. This includes the development of a comprehensive package of guidance and training.

If you would like to receive a further information booklet prepared by the Scottish Government please email [safeguarding@cofscotland](mailto:safeguarding@cofscotland) and we will be happy to forward it on to you.

## 'For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven'

A comprehensive and in depth report addressing the theological and practical issues of **forgiveness and proportionality for sex offenders wishing to worship in Church of Scotland congregations** was the subject of a report to this year's General Assembly in May. The Working Group has sought to offer theological integrity to the duty of accepting sex offenders who seek to worship, while at the same time recognise the paramountcy of affording protection to children and adults at risk.

The aim of the 47 page joint report by the Kirk's Mission and Discipleship Council and Safeguarding Committee, prepared by its Forgiveness and Proportionality Working Group, is to discover and set-out how the theological concept of Christian forgiveness informs the policy and practice of the Church in relation to the inclusion of sex offenders in congregations.

While it is recognised that no guarantees can ever be offered regarding any system or process of protection and inclusion, it is hoped by the Working Group that the methodology and the theological reflections of this report may support and advise The Church of Scotland throughout its congregations.

Forgiveness is a gift from God and is freely given, without reference to any prior conditions, or promises of alteration of behaviour, the report states. By the grace of God, the sex offender should be able to admit

responsibility and acknowledge the serious consequences of their actions. Sex offenders who attend worship in the Church's congregations will be supported and monitored through local congregational Safeguarding Panels under the guidance of the Safeguarding Office of the Church. The Safeguarding Office plays a key role in supporting congregations to manage the increasing amount of legislation, policies and protocols required when protecting vulnerable groups.

The hymn "Let us build a House where love can dwell and all safely live," has been used as a linking theme throughout the report.

The recommendations of the report have been formed with the focus on public protection and the protection of vulnerable groups in the Church. It has also been designed to offer a proportionate response when the Church welcomes those sex offenders who claim forgiveness of God.

A policy document was also prepared for and accepted by the General Assembly.

Copies of the Forgiveness and Proportionality Report, the Policy document and sample Covenants of Responsibility are all available from the Safeguarding Office. A Code of Practice for Congregations and in particular Safeguarding Panels, is currently under construction.

Jennifer McCreanor

## Disclosure forms

THE Safeguarding Office is still receiving Disclosure applications where page four has NOT been completed by the Safeguarding Coordinator. As per the guidelines March 2007, the Safeguarding Coordinator completes **E1 to E8 only**. All updated guidelines are available as downloads from the 'Resources' page on the website or directly from the Safeguarding Office.

## Multiple Coversheets

AS from April 2009 CRBS are unable to accept photocopied multiple coversheets. As a result they have issued a new multiple coversheet. This was distributed by email or posted to all Safeguarding Coordinators by the Safeguarding Office the same month.

## Caring for Children Declarations

WE have been advising of the updated Caring for Children Declaration in our previous Newsletters. To-date, however, we are still receiving out-of-date copies. Unfortunately, as from 1 August 2009 we will be returning ALL incomplete or obsolete Disclosure Scotland applications, multiple coversheets and declarations. These forms are available direct from the Safeguarding Office or can be downloaded from the 'Resources' page on our website.

WANT to help turn good intentions into better lives? Then become a supporter of for Scotland's Disabled Children (fSDC), the national campaign coalition aiming to ensure that families with a disabled child enjoy the same quality of life as other families. The coalition is calling on parents, disabled children and young people to sign up and get involved in its campaigning activity. It will be launching its first big campaign this summer to find the missing £34 million of new money that was supposed to be for disabled children's services in Scotland. Local supporters will be vital to the campaign. Over 30 organisations have already joined the coalition and more are being urged to sign up. The coalition focuses on improving services and provision to families with a disabled child around the areas of short breaks, transition support, childcare and education. To find out more about for Scotland's Disabled Children contact:  
donna.tomlin@cafamilly.org.uk  
or call 0131 659 2939.



## Revised Child Safety in Your Church Premises: A Walk Through Guide

YOU can access the revised 'Walk Through Guide' on the 'Resources' page of the Safeguarding Office website. This guide provides a checklist of health and safety issues relating to child safety in church premises.

## Amended Congregational Register

THE Congregation Register form SG6 from the Handbook has been amended and there is now an electronic version available to use. A link to this has been sent to all Safeguarding Coordinators, Trainers and Presbytery Contacts.

The new electronic version is available both in word and excel format and can also be found on the 'Resources' page of the Safeguarding Office website.

## SG5 Form – Further Information

IN the last Newsletter we advised that we did not want the SG5 transfer form sent into the Safeguarding Office, however, some congregations have been doing this and it has proved useful. We have decided that an extra step should be added to the process where congregations keep the original form, but send a photocopy into the Safeguarding Office to enable us to update our database. We will add this step when we update the Handbook.

## Ministries Council

AS part of a five year rolling review process, Ministries Council are asking all Ministers to complete another Disclosure Scotland application form. The Safeguarding Office are undertaking the administration of this process and sending out the information packs to all Ministers, Locums, Enquirers, Deacons and Readers. The process will be carried out on a presbytery by presbytery basis and will be completed by the end of 2009. Ministries Council have asked for the kind

assistance of our Safeguarding Coordinators to verify the identification produced. Should your Minister have any enquiries regarding why the process is being undertaken, please contact Ministries on 0131 225 5722. For all administrative enquires, please contact the Safeguarding Office on 0131 240 2256. Both Ministries Council and the Safeguarding Office thank you for your ongoing assistance and support to the protection of children and young people within The Church of Scotland.

## Myth Busters

### Myth one: Certificates and clearance

Further to our last Newsletter's Myth Busters section we are continuing to receive enquiries relating to Disclosure Certificates and clearance. There are two common thoughts (1) on receiving their Disclosure Scotland Certificate applicants have assumed they are now cleared to work with children and (2) Safeguarding Coordinators have asked to see an applicant's Disclosure Scotland Certificate to confirm clearance. Both of these are wrong, as an applicant should NOT take up post until their Safeguarding Coordinator receives a clearance letter from the Safeguarding Office.

### Myth two: Declarations and envelopes

Applicants are contacting the Safeguarding Office when they are completing their Caring for Children Declaration to enquire if they have to show the

declaration to the Safeguarding Coordinator. This is a myth as the Caring for Children Declaration is a confidential document, therefore, whether you leave it blank or tell us about something, it should be placed in a sealed envelope and handed to the Safeguarding Coordinator. This has been suggested in training and we will be introducing envelopes into the Disclosure packs that are sent to all Safeguarding Coordinators.

### Myth three: I have already been Disclosure checked by my employer

This is a common myth. At the moment a Disclosure check is organisation specific, therefore, anyone who wishes to start working with children in The Church of Scotland requires a Disclosure check to be carried out by this organisation.

## Contacting Us

WE thought you may find it helpful to know who is who when contacting the Safeguarding Office.

In the **Advisory Team** there is Richard Crosse (Head of Safeguarding), Jennifer McCreanor and Kerry-Ann Hay.

In the **Administration Team** there is Lesley Rodger, Catherine Hart, Margaret Johnston, Liz Munro and Marshall Paterson.

Finally, any **Training** related enquiries will be directed to Andy Strachan.

When contacting the Safeguarding Office either by phone or email you will be directed to the person most suitable to answer your query. It would also be very helpful if you could supply your name, congregation and the post that you hold.



## Destroying Paperwork

THE Safeguarding Office has been made aware that references and job application forms are being retained by some congregations, as part of the recruitment process.

Once the information has been recorded on the Congregational Register and the date of the clearance letter has been inserted, then the references and application forms should all be shredded.

# Training Issues

## Island Training



Benbecula Parish Church



Volunteers from Benbecula, Barra and Carinish Churches taking part in training

### Kirk Session Training

The training course for Kirk Sessions is now offered across the entire country, though the way it is being presented varies significantly.

Courses are being run occasionally for an individual Session, though the more common model is for a cluster group of between three and five Sessions joining together. One presbytery however, have organised things on the grand scale, with courses being run for 230+ participants from across the entire presbytery. These courses are being presented in lecture theatre style, with little opportunity for active participation and interaction between participants. However, the clear evidence of the feedback I have been receiving shows that this style works just as effectively and most importantly the message is being delivered, heard and understood! Mind you, the trainers are braver than I am!

I feel the most important facts are now coming home to Sessions everywhere. That we can no longer be as complacent as we may have been in the past; Safeguarding policy, procedures and good practice make common sense and exist to protect everyone; and that the Session has legal responsibility if they fail to follow policy and procedure. As the Convenor of the Safeguarding Committee, Rev John Christie said at General Assembly, (a quote from a member of Perth Presbytery) "We can no longer regard safeguarding as a necessary evil; but as a necessity because of evil!"

### Training for Trainers

The Learning and Development Course for prospective trainers is to be held on 23 to 24 January 2010 at Carronvale House, Larbert. The course is once again running jointly with Boys' Brigade (and possibly Girls' Brigade) trainers.

There are currently seven Trainers in Training who are being invited to attend, but the opportunity exists

for those presbyteries who have yet to appoint a Trainer or who wish to expand their team to meet the increasing demands for training, to gain additional places on the course for their nominees. The course is fully residential and all accommodation, meals and reasonable travel costs shall be met by the Safeguarding Office.

### Trainers' Conference

By now all trainers and presbytery contacts should have received their invitations to the 2009 Trainers' Conference; even the snail mail invites should have arrived by now, so, if you have not received your invitation yet it probably means you have not given us your new email address or failed to check your in-box for a while.

Just to remind you, that this year's Conference is being held on 9 and 10 October 2009; the venue is the Scottish Police College, Tulliallen, Kincardine on Forth; and for the benefit of those who may not have been before, the accommodation is in single, en-suite, rooms and all costs, including reasonable travel, are paid by this office.

A small planning group met on 3 August 2009 to discuss the 2009 Conference and I am really quite excited about it. Obviously, I do not wish to tell everyone what is to happen, otherwise what is the point in having a conference? But the programme is very full and very topical for both trainers and presbytery contacts alike. I do not think I am giving away too much when I say that the social aspect and the opportunity to meet and exchange views and experiences with ones peers are also very important aspects of our Annual Conference.

I look forward to seeing you all then.

Andy

### PRAYER

God of Love, God of Peace

This fractured word

Cries out in pain

Burns deep into my soul

And challenges me

To make a difference

God of Love, God of Peace

God of this world

Scarred by grief and tears

Ignorance and fear

Soften hearts of stone

And begin with mine

God of Love, God of Peace

Create within me

A heart for people

A desire for change

For new beginnings

To start this day.

Prayer by John Birch. FaithandWorship.com

Please note: the details contained in 'Training Issues' relate mainly to trainers.