

Churches' Forum for Safeguarding

Minutes of a meeting

On 7th February 2007 at Friends House, London

Present:

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| Pearl Luxon | Churches' Forum for Safeguarding |
| Adrian Child, | Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Adults (COPCA) |
| Adelaide Nolan | Lutheran Council of Great Britain |
| Dean Juster (in the Chair) | Salvation Army |
| Anne Hosking (Minutes) | The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) |
| Sheila Mitchell | The Moravian Church |
| Stephen Haward | The Congregational Federation |

Apologies:

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| Ron Ludgate | Churches' Agency for Safeguarding |
| Aline Flynn | Old Baptist Union |
| Paul Martin | Baptist Union |
| Alan Elson | Baptist Union |
| Jennifer McCreanor | Church of Scotland |
| Jill Steele | Church of Scotland |
| Emma Wilcock | Wesleyan |
| Richard Foot | Sanctuary |
| Helen Edwards | NSPCC |
| Meirion Morris | Church in Wales |
| Carol Owen | Church in Wales |
| John Brown | United Reformed Church |
| Mary Gandy | CTBI |

1. Devotions were led by Dean Juster.
2. We approved the minutes of 10th October 2006.
3. We approved the minutes of the Churches' Forum for Safeguarding of 28th November 2006, with the addition of Adrian Child's name.
4. **Matters arising from 28th November**
 - a) Pearl Luxon will let us have the relevant details for the DFES, including *Working Together* books.

Kim Medford-Vassell will enquire by email how our organisations want to be listed on the website.

b) **Meeting with Home Office**

Pearl Luxon has still had no response following the meeting in September. Pearl and Sheila will check their own notes and draft a brief record instead.

c) **Representation from Scotland**

We discussed widening contacts between the CFS members and the churches' committee for child protection in Scotland. We agreed to continue feeding information to Jennifer McGreanor, to pass on. We would positively welcome attendance at the CFS meetings from our equivalents in Scotland and Ireland.

d) **New legislation in Scotland**

We hope Jennifer McGreanor will clarify the new legislation at a later meeting of the CFS. Pearl Luxon is concerned about the possibility of different criteria and eligibility emerging in each country, which may necessitate new guidance for each country.

e) **Revision of Standards Document**

Pearl Luxon and the NSPCC are discussing NSPCC's endorsement of this document following revisions.

f) **Next meeting on 8th May 2007**

The CFS meeting on 8th May (note not April) will be at the Salvation Army, 101 Newington Causeway, Elephant & Castle.

N.B. The Committee, and any others who wish to attend, meets at 11am – then the Forum gathers at 12.30 for lunch, then the business meeting will be from 1pm until 3.30pm.

The main topic of the earlier meeting at 11am will be the CFS Constitution and membership.

5. **Training Group Report**

Blemished Disclosure Programme: Sheila Mitchell reported that the training day at St Deiniol's went well. The wide range of experience included those well-informed and those who had had no experience at all. The trainers adapted the programme to increase the time for discussion, and to give an opportunity for asking questions. It would help trainees if they engaged in preparation beforehand. Timing – the long distances travelled impinged on the rather long day. We noted the difficulty of composing realistic but anonymous case studies, with the complexity that actual disclosures presented.

Feedback is very clear: the content was right, participants got what they needed.

We admired the pack prepared for the training days, and noted it is not designed to stand alone. The pack would not normally be sold independent of the training days.

There are 3 scheduled for March:

Janet Hind and Pearl Luxon, leading – London

Mick Maskill and Hilary Murden, leading, - Leeds

Rachel Bussey and Carolyn Buckeridge, leading - Bristol

We encouraged the Group to plan, in principle, another training day in September.

6. **Criminal Records Bureau update**

We are relieved the fees will not be raised this year.

We need to be alert to opportunities for consultation on the vetting and barring scheme.

We have been advised to keep a paper trail of how decisions are made on a blemished disclosure, eg, risk assessment. We need to ask the Office of the Information Commissioner what exactly may be kept, what must be kept, and for how long, and the special circumstances of the churches involved. We noted that the Criminal Records Bureau guidance assumes a six month retention period, which may not always be sufficient. Advice from the police, CRB and OIC is contradictory and needs urgent clarification, especially where soft information is concerned.

7. We discussed how some CFS members in bigger denominations than the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding have more time and expertise, though we all have the same needs. How can we help each other without over loading any one person?

We agreed to brainstorm a draft letter at the end of this meeting (to OIC) and to send it on behalf of CFS.

8. **Conference in the summer – CTBI 4 Nations**

The definition of spiritual abuse, our proposed topic, was explored. For this conference we would stick to that included in *Working Together to Safeguard children* (a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, HM Government 2006)

The tentative date for the conference is 19th June, but much depends on invited speakers and availability.

Dean and Pearl suggest Elizabeth Ingram to help plan the conference. Costs of speakers and planners could either be factored into the fees, or the insurers might be approached for sponsorship. Dean to take action.

We noted that a consultation document can be found on the DFES website and we are encouraged to respond – each as appropriate.

9. **Following Churches' Forum for Safeguarding Meeting** – 19th June (if not used for the conference) – at Methodist Church House.

10. **Any other business**

- a) Adrian Child reported that on 19th June in Northampton there will be a conference organised by COPCA and two other organisations on images of children and the internet with speakers from Child Net International and other bodies. It is hoped that one outcome for the Roman Catholic Church would be the development of a Church policy. Adrian Child will circulate information on

this conference. It will cover a range of topics, from how the church perceives those who have used child pornography, to misuse of the Net.

- b) Pearl Luxon reports that the first annual safeguarding conference for the Church of England and the Methodist Church will take place next week with Eileen Shearer as a speaker. A worship leader has been booked, to nurture the conference and its participants.
- c) At the next meeting we look forward to welcoming as speakers: Richard Foot, coming to speak about Sanctuary and Helen Edwards of NSPCC introducing their “Toolkit” of materials for ‘hard to reach communities’.
- d) The Forum thanked Friends for their hospitality.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION

***Working Together* books.**

Free copies are available for charitable organisations from:

Contact Louise.Moore@dfes.gsi.gov.uk Tel. 020 7273 5781 – at Children's Safeguards Policy Unit, Department for education and skills, Area 2C, Caxton House, Tothill St , London , SW1H 9NA

Pearl hopes to bring more copies to the next meeting.

Next meeting 8th May

The working group on the Constitution, and any others who wish to attend, meets at 11am at Salvation Army Headquarters

The Forum gathers at 12.30 for lunch, and the business meeting will be from 1pm until 3.30pm.