

Terms of Reference November 2012 (Rev Sept 2015) (Rev November 2019)

1. Background

- 1.1 The National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC) was mandated by the Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious at a joint meeting in April 2008, when both conferences accepted the recommendations of the Safeguarding with Confidence Implementation Group on the implementation of the recommendations of The Cumberlege Commission.
- 1.2 The NCSC, whilst mandated by the Church, acts as an independent body which sets the standards for safeguarding arrangements for children and vulnerable adults in the Catholic Church in England and Wales and oversees their implementation on behalf of the Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious.
- 1.3 The landscape of the Church has changed in the ten years since the Cumberlege report. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse is taking a keen interest in the strategy and operations of the Church across England and Wales. Reports from various countries around the world containing stark revelations of child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, and the evident failures of leadership within local churches, have caused the Bishops to reflect on their own leadership and on the responsibility that they hold in England and Wales for ensuring that safeguarding is embedded in every aspect of the life of the Church. The need to review the current structure and arrangements is recognised by the Bishops of England and Wales, who in their 'Ad Limina' statement asked the NCSC to commission an entirely independent and comprehensive review of the safeguarding structures that currently operate within the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The Church remains committed to the 'One Church' approach to safeguarding and seeks to ensure that it has an infrastructure and operational arrangements that can support and deliver this.

2. Membership of the NCSC

- 2.1 The Chair of the Commission will be a lay person of seniority and with real credibility appointed by the Bishops' Conference (CBCEW) and the Conference of Religious (CoR).
- 2.2 There will be three vice chairs, one an appointed member of the CBCEW, one an appointed member of the CoR and the third a lay member of the NCSC.
- 2.3 The membership will include both lay and clerical representation:
- Three Bishops (one as vice chair),
 - Three representatives of the CoR (one as vice chair),
 - Three lay chairs of Commissions - two Diocesan and one Religious - selected by the NCSC Chair and Vice Chairs. Chairs of Commissions will be invited to send written expressions of interest, on the basis of which candidates will be selected for interview.

- Four additional lay members with relevant experience and knowledge.
- A Canon Lawyer who is a co-opted member.
- Additional members may be co-opted from time to time based on their particular expertise.

2.4 Members of the Commission will be appointed by the Chair and Vice Chairs. This will be carried out in an open and transparent process, including external advertisements for lay members.

2.5 Selected members will represent a wide range of skills and experience that can be applied to safeguarding children or adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This experience could have been gained in social work, health care, the law, the criminal justice system or other relevant work. Strong analytical and strategic planning skills are also a necessity.

2.6 Members will be appointed to terms of 3 years and will normally serve no more than 2 terms. Members can be reappointed after their term of office has ended with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chairs. Where it is beneficial for there to be continuation beyond 2 terms in order to retain expertise that is not readily available, the Chair and Vice Chairs can agree to extend the appointment. There are different roles on the Commission and members can be appointed to a different role during or at the end of their term and their term of office will be deemed to start anew.

2.7 Co-opted members will be appointed for a term of office relevant to their contribution to the work of the Commission.

3 Meetings

3.1 Meetings of the full Commission will be held at least quarterly.

3.2 The meetings will be quorate with one half of the members present.

3.3 The Agendas and minutes of the Part 1 meetings will be published, with the use of confidential annexes where appropriate.

3.4 The Director of the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) will be in attendance at NCSC meetings and provide expert safeguarding advice.

4 Activities of the NCSC

4.1 The NCSC will set the standards for the safeguarding arrangements for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It will consider recommendations from an Inquiry or Review and support any necessary implementation. It will also oversee the development and updating of national policies and hold diocesan and religious safeguarding commissions to account for the delivery of those standards.

4.2 The NCSC will make annual reports to the CBCEW and the CoR about its progress in ensuring compliance with national policies and the implementation of the recommendations of The Cumberlege Commission. These reports will be open documents, with the use of confidential annexes where appropriate.

4.3 The NCSC will, when necessary, commission the CSAS to undertake thematic quality assurance exercises to assist in ensuring compliance with nationally agreed policies and in making reports to the CBCEW and the CoR.

4.4 The NCSC will produce an annual work plan. It will set up standing committees and working groups of its members, in order to expedite its work. The Director of CSAS will be called upon to advise such committees and working groups.

4.5 In addition, the NCSC will set the strategic work programme of the CSAS, in consultation with CBCEW and the CoR.

5 Administration

5.1 Secretarial Support will be by a Secretary, appointed by the Director of CSAS, the Chair and Vice Chairs. The Secretary will be responsible for arranging meetings, attending meetings, taking and preparing minutes, writing draft papers and collating final papers, placing orders, arranging for payment of invoices. The Secretary will also act as web manager for the NCSC website and be the central point of contact for all NCSC business.

6 Finance

6.1 The NCSC will be funded by the CBCEW and the CoR. The NCSC will develop an annual budget for agreement with the CBCEW and the CoR prior to the beginning of each financial year.

6.2 The accounts will be held with the Catholic Trust for England and Wales.

6.3 The Chair of the NCSC, in consultation with the Director of CSAS, will advise the General Secretary of the CBCEW if he/she considers that the CSAS budget is not adequate for the tasks entrusted to the CSAS.

7 Termination of Office

7.1 The Chair, in consultation with the Vice Chairs, may determine that any member of the Commission should cease to be a member. In the event of this relating to the Chair, matters will be referred to the President of the CBCEW and the President of the CoR.

These reasons may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. They are convicted of a criminal offence;
- ii. They are not convicted, but concerns remain about their conduct towards children or adults;
- iii. They are removed from a professional register for misconduct or are the subject of Church disciplinary measures;
- iv. They fail to contribute to the work plan of the Commission;
- v. Serial non-attendance; or
- vi. Issues arise in the context of any performance evaluation process introduced by the NCSC to monitor Commission members' performance and contribution.

Reviewed Sept 2012 and approved by the CBCEW and the CoR, Reviewed and approved November 2019