

MINUTES – National Catholic Safeguarding Commission – Part 1

Tuesday 01 December 2020 – 10.00 - 12.00 – 13.00 – 15.00

Video conference, with order of the agenda according to the availability of guests.

Present:

- + Mark Davies (MD)
- Fr Nicholas Edmonds-Smith (NES)
- Sr Eileen Glancy (EG)
- Fr Brendan Killeen (BK)
- Mrs Elizabeth Manero (EM)
- Mr Dave Marshall (DM) – Survivor Advisory Panel (10.00 – 11.00)
- + Paul Mason (PM)
- Mr Patrick McDermott (PMD) (Commission Chair Rep, Leeds)
- Ms Rachel O’Driscoll (ROD) Vice-Chair
- Mr Chris Pearson (CP) – Chair**
- Mr James Reilly (Commission Chair Rep Jesuits)
- + Marcus Stock (MS) Vice-Chair (afternoon)
- Ms Dani Wardman (DW) Conference of Religious, Vice-Chair

In attendance: Ms Christine Edgar (CE) – CSAS Safeguarding Manager
Mrs Anna Gebski (AG) – NCSC Secretary (Minutes)
Dr Colette Limbrick (CL) – CSAS Director

Apologies: Mr Peter Charlesworth (PC) (Safeguarding Coordinators Rep), Ms Kathy Perrin (KP) – Catholic Insurance Service

1. **Apologies for absence**
PC and KP were unable to attend. Due to urgent commitment, MS attended part of the afternoon session.
2. **Introduction and welcome**
The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome to all members.
3. **Opening Prayer**
MD led the opening prayer.
4. **Members declaration of interest and statement of confidentiality**
There were no declarations made, but should they arise they would be noted. Confidentiality was agreed.
5. **Minutes of the meeting held on 02 October 2020**

The minutes were accepted by the Commission, with minor typographical amendments and an addition to Part 2 point 7c Audits and Reviews in Safeguarding, which should indicate that transparency and conflict of interest should be further considered.

6. Survivor Advisory Panel and Hollins Review

- a) CP reported on his lengthy discussions with DM about the intention of the CBCEW that the important role of the SAP should be continued in future safeguarding arrangements. At the post plenary CBCEW press conference, this had been stressed, however areas of the media appear to have misinterpreted the intentions of the future role of the SAP (as well as consultation with individual victims and survivors). It was noted that the SAP was disappointed that the post plenary statement by the CBCEW had not included a note of thanks directed at the SAP.
- b) DM confirmed that at the SAP meeting on 02 October 2020, members' views on the Elliott report were the same as those presented by DM at the last NCSC meeting.
- c) DM informed the NCSC that an additional non-formal meeting of the SAP had been held the previous week to discuss the IICSA report. SAP members had commented favourably on their experience of the role of Cardinal Nichols towards victims and survivors. There had also been support for the recommendations for regular training in conjunction with victims and survivors (IICSA Report, Recommendation 2).
- d) The joint development day to discuss the next steps further to the Hollins Review did not take place in October due to the meeting held to review the Elliott Report. The SAP are up to date with the current situation and arrangements around the transition period and are enthusiastic about their potential contribution.
- e) DM confirmed that the SAP supported the Hollins recommendation for independent training, funded and managed as a separate entity from the CBCEW. Baroness Hollins suggested that funding might be found through Porticus. Both the IICSA and Elliott reports recommended victim and survivor support in providing training and that victims and survivors are also the best placed to recommend how this support should be developed and managed.
- f) Members considered how best to move forward with the independent training recommendation, in view of the transitional phase of safeguarding in the CBCEW. Members agreed that this is now an action for the CBCEW Implementation Group to move forward together with the SAP. It was agreed that EM, ROD and DW would draft a paper on behalf of the NCSC for the CBCEW Implementation Group that will summarise the Hollins training proposal, highlight the support of the NCSC for the future SAP role in both the governance and operation of a separate training entity and provide a steer to assist the CBCEW Implementation Group to action the Hollins training recommendation. This paper would come to the next meeting of the NCSC.
- g) Members agreed that CP would write to Baroness Hollins to ask her to outline her vision for a separate training entity funded by Porticus. This would provide a basis for the CBCEW Implementation Group making a funding application to realise this recommendation (it was noted that as the SAP was not a legal entity, and that it therefore could not make the independent funding applications).

- h) CP confirmed that he had provided Canon Chris Thomas with comments about the SAP contribution further to the Elliott Review Report. It was agreed that a wider consultation and the perspective of victims and survivors must be at the core of the work of the CBCEW Implementation Group and beyond.

7. ICCSA Report

- a) DW had shared an overview of the IICSA report that she had prepared for CoR. DW and CL had also prepared a paper comparing the IICSA and Elliott Review reports, highlighting themes, similarities and gaps. This would be shared with Members and could be shared further with Commission Chairs and Safeguarding Coordinators. It would also be a document for the CBCEW Implementation Group.
- b) The IICSA and Elliott reports both highlighted the need for rapid change. The IICSA report provided recommendations, which, together with the Elliott Report would be the markers for the new arrangements for safeguarding in England and Wales. Clarity is needed as to where the responsibility lies for outstanding IICSA issues and updates and the question of whether there would be a further IICSA report. CP would contact Canon Chris Thomas for clarification. In engaging with Canon Chris Thomas, CP would also recommend that all engagement with the Holy See regarding the decree was documented (with a full audit trail of correspondence produced). It was noted that IICSA would shortly be investigating faith groups in general.
- c) It was agreed that it had proved very beneficial that the CBCEW asked the NCSC to commission the Independent Review into the Safeguarding Structures and Arrangements in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, as it meant that a whole consultation process has already taken place and implementation of recommendations could happen quickly.

8. Independent Review Report

- a) The November plenary of the Bishops' Conference accepted wholeheartedly the recommendations in the Elliott Review Report. The Bishops issued a statement covering both this report and the ICCSA report and outlined their acceptance of the recommendations. A press conference was held at the end of the Plenary (20 November 2020).
- b) The next steps require that the NCSC be informed of their mandate during the transition period and how they can assist the CBCEW Implementation Group. It would be good to have an action plan for the transition, with dates for communications meetings with the NCSC, SAP, Commission Chairs and Safeguarding Coordinators.

9. Malicious and/or abusive emails

Malicious, repetitive and sometimes abusive emails are common and distract from the important work of safeguarding. CL confirmed that an email footer is being prepared to warn against such actions. CE had developed a policy document outlining what to do and how to respond to persistent correspondents. As the issue is wider than just the NCSC or CSAS, the document has been presented to CaTEW for consideration, further development and adoption. This would not alter the way victim or survivor complaints are handled. CL would circulate both the Complaints Policy and the Abusive Emails policy to Members for comparison.

10. Complaints Policy

The lack of a Complaints Policy was highlighted in 2019, during the ICCSA inquiry sessions. CSAS had prepared a policy, which was ratified at the Bishops' Plenary in November and taken by the Bishops to their Diocesan Trustees for adoption. This policy would be revised in due

course in light of the ICCSA Report recommendations. It was noted that the current format was not suitable for the Religious.

11. Any other business

- a) Ampleforth College run by the St Laurence Education Trust has recently been advised by the Education Department of their intention to serve an enforcement action against them. The college, which is now completely independent from the Abbey, has appealed this action.
- b) The Betrayal of Trust document published by the Church of England contained interesting points of learning on protocols and the document should be drawn to the attention of CSSA. JR would prepare a short briefing paper.

CP finished the meeting with thanks to all Members for their commitment and wishing everyone a happy Christmas.

Dates and venues of future meetings:

During Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, the work of the NCSC continues through electronic and virtual meetings.

The next meeting will be scheduled for early February after the January 2021 Bishops' Plenary.